GunOta Volume 01 – Chapter 000-014

Chapter 0

Year 20XX, Winter, On A Certain Day in February.

I, Hotta Youta, am twenty-seven years old this year. I live alone where my age equals my time without a girlfriend. Also a virgin, high school dropout and a former-hikikomori.

Currently working at metalworking factory, in Tokyo's metropolitan Oota district.

"It was a cold day like this, when Tanaka passed away…."

Having finished work, it was a boring walk home, while, regretfully recalling painful memories.

I became a hikikomori in my high school days— even though I call it hell, I am by no means exaggerating it.

My only back-up plan was taking the entrance exam, in case I failed the enrollment for other private high schools, but I failed to pass the examination for even low level private high school. At that time, my friend, Tanaka Kouji and I, were bullied by three DQN(delinquent) in the same class.

I think because we were targeted we both became thin and weak-willed.

Then getting beaten up was a common occurrence.

Extortion, burning my skin with cigarette buds, masturbating in front of the delinquents, licking and drinking out of a urinal— they never stopped.

I was scared of getting to know my classmates so I kept thinking that they were of no concern to me.

The homeroom teacher, wanting to avoid the situation, pretended not to see most of the fights.

Without the courage to oppose them, we just continued to take the bullying silently.

I was released from their bullying only when we got to second year.

The reason is that our classes changed.

It turned out only I was separated from them while Tanaka and the delinquents were in the same classroom.

Since they'd need to go out of their way to cross over to my classroom, they didn't bother bullying me. The outcome was, the brunt of it was concentrated on Tanaka. Yet, I didn't even think of helping him.

I just breathed a sigh of relief having been released from being bullied.

As I expected, I'll only be saved if he's sacrificed.

An incident occurred before second year's winter break.

As a former bullied child, I chose to distance myself from the surroundings; always eating lunch alone.

Rather than eat in the toilet in winter, the back of the school building is less popular. Therefore, in those cold days, I always ate lunch outside.

Tanaka and the delinquents had gathered there.

He was naked in seiza position on the ground while shivering and fully soaked with water.

Besides being left with a water bucket, he apparently had dry leaves clinging to his body.

The delinquent group seemed to be having fun as they laughed and took pictures with their smartphone.

Tanaka recognizing me, faced me with a gaze seeking for help.

The three of them also turned around after noticing me.

“What are you looking at? Skinny midget.”

“What’s with that expression? Huh!?”

I became frightened by their voice and ran away at full speed

Tanaka’s face went paled in despair after I abandoned him. Even now, I vividly remember it.

I definitely won’t forget this for my entire life.

That very same night, Tanaka committed suicide by hanging himself by the slide at the playground.

In his suicide note he accused about the bullying done by those 3.

The school dealt with the problem by immediately and indefinitely suspending those the trio.

By immediately suspending them, the school had intended to conclude the incident before the situation had become worse.

After the school disposed of them according to their plan, it had become a discussion about the perpetrators’ companions.

A settlement to the discussion was met in one month.

The perpetrators had to pay fine which was a lot of money to the victim’s parents when they settled.

Tanaka’s suicide ended up in a small column written on a local newspaper.

Since that year, I had stayed inside my home.

I felt responsible for Tanaka’s suicide — furthermore, now that he passed away, I became the target of the delinquent’s bullying while

sitting around. And because of my fear of being bullied, I became unable to leave from my room at my home.

I'm a pessimistic, despicable coward. However, I was unable to leave my room at those days.

Eventually, I dropped out of high school.

Since then, I'd always stayed inside my room engrossed in gaming, manga, anime, model guns, and modern weapon system and the like.

I admired modern weapon system especially the model guns. Then, using a real handgun to shoot those three delinquents to death. I really want to have a dream where I board a tank and chase them and stuff.

When I approached the age of twenty, my father's connections in Tokyo's Oota district will get me a job in a metalwork factory, or I'll get a million yen and leave my family.

1,000,000 is a lot. But, at best, I don't think I'll have that in only a year.

I can't have that option. —

However, it was good regardless of the outcome. Even though I'm sometimes confine myself indoors, aside from taking the responsibility for my younger siblings, I had no future prospects.

The teacher gave me his seal of approval by saying "Certainly eligible for Tokyo University!" to my typical parents, as long as I dont' become baggage no matter what to my 4 superior and younger siblings, it'll be fine.

In reality, after moving to Tokyo University, because this was my first time living alone, I never had gotten into a contact with anyone.

The typical me that had been cast away by my parents was carefree and happy.

Above all, because I was separated from that mountain town, I will never again meet those delinquent trio.

The metal-working factory of my father and the others was strict but it wasn't filled with unreasonable violence. I was even instructed carefully in the job.

Compared to my hellish life in the last year of high school, the difference is heaven and earth.

Originally, I was confident in my skillful and dextrous fingers. Again and again, since I strived to meet expectations, I had to acquire a lot of skills.

If you were to compare me to those who are called craftsman, I may not even hold a foot…

Thus I immersed myself in my job to forget those hellish high-school days for approximately 7 years — but, every time it became cold in winter, I remember Tanaka.

If I had been a little brave or something, it might had not ended up in suicide, wouldn't it…?

At the usual convenience store, I bought my evening bento and tea.

"…Now, even though I'm a good person, I still haven't recovered."

While sighing from melancholy, I walked toward the residential area.

There remained 10 meters until I reached my home but I noticed on the way, a suspicious man standing.

So that I could avoid the detestable light from the street lights, I had leaned on the concrete wall.

Because of the moonlight, I was dimly able to make out his figure.

He wore a hooded jacket, and jeans under him. Doesn't he feel cold? That's not the sort of coat you should wear. Because he was looking down I wasn't able to see his face. I was able to judge him as having a height of 180 centimeters, and a plain physique.

If I start retracing my steps for main road and pretend not to see him after such a long time, on the contrary, he'll likely give me strange vibes.

It did not look like he wanted to fight since he was glancing down, so I'll take as much distance as possible while I try to pass him.

" Hey, wait sec…."

"!?"

After he called me, I involuntarily stood still.

The man began heading straight to me.

As the street light shone on that guy's face, I was able to check his face.

My goggling eyes did not meet his gaze, he had a bad skin complexion, a unshaven face, gaping nose pierce, and from the nape of the neck there hung a tattoo.

Surprisingly, he had changed completely, I understood immediately. It was one of the 3 delinquents that had bullied me, it was their leader. I'm sure his name was…. Souma Ryouichi

"Ain't It cuz a you that ma lifes in da dumps! Aaaah! Fuck!!! Why me!!"

"Ah, uh, ah……."

The time came for him to get back at me, I feel nauseous because he reeked of something like garbage. If I remember correctly, I read that there's a legal drug on the internet that if you intake it, you smell like this.

The other party is in an unstable state. But right now, I'll just turn around pretend not to notice, and run away when possible.

However a flashback of my hellish past made my legs tremble, and kept me from moving.

“Tanaka-kuun! Hotta-kuun! Ya look like trash! You know he died silently, right!? Damn it!”

He took out something like a cheap kitchen knife, he’d have bought with a hundred yen, from his hoodie’s pocket.

“Uwaaaaaaaa!”

My fear reached its apex as I screamed miserably, I threw the convienience store bag I was holding, turned around and ran with everything I had.

The thought of bravely fighting and subduing him didn’t come to my mind even once.

But, I could do nothing but scream and run.

Run, run, run, run, run— charging to the park.

Even after that, he eventually caught up and shoved me from behind.

I ran with as much vigor as I had but fell face first into the sandbox.

As soon as he mounted me, without any hesitation, with both hands he swung down the kitchen knife.

“Gugaa…a” *choking*

I felt the blood erupted on my pierced chest.

From pain, the previous stimulating sensation became hot.

“Die! Damn it! Damn it! Damn iiiiiiiiiiitt!!!”

He continued, and continued, and continued stabbing me with the kitchen knife, forcefully breaking my ribs while letting out a cry.

I could tell that my consciousness was quickly receding to it’s border a number of times.

I heard a woman’s scream in the distance as if I was underwater.

My eyelids were as heavy as lead and had the feeling of falling down into an abyss.

The last scene I saw was me bathing in my own pool of blood, and his face looking like a mad man.

My consciousness stopped like a frozen TV screen.

Chapter 1

Slowly appearing from the water's surface, Hotta Youta had regained consciousness and opened his eyes.

…Is this the hospital?

My last memory was burned into my memory; being bullied for being a loner and getting stabbed repeatedly with a kitchen knife– something like that.
I was brought to a hospital, luckily, I expected I'd lose my life. But no matter how hard I tried I didn't feel anything.
I was put to sleep on top a soft bed with pure white sheets and for some reason the one sleeping next to me was an infant.

Sleeping together with a baby, for the wounds to quickly recover or something like that. Is this the latest medical treatment practice at this hospital?

For argument's sake, assuming I concede 100 steps, no… 10000 steps, for such a treatment to exist.
Hmm? Does the baby sleeping next to me have dog ears?

To start with, I doubt there is an artificial product such as this. The silver ears that were twitching brought themselves to my attention. They were the real deal before my very eyes.
Perhaps a mutation that deforms the human body? And possibly from child birth?
After pondering about that matter, a woman came to glance at me.

"—, —, —-."

She did not speak Japanese, nor did she talk in a language I was familiar with.
However, not only was her language noticeable, but also her figure.

About in her early 20s. In addition to being a tall woman, she also had noticeably big breasts.
She was a beautiful girl with slightly droopy eyes. But thanks to that, she had a gentle expression that could make everyone looking at her relieved.

Above all, I had noticed that the color of her hair was pink and ears that sprung up similar to rabbits above her head.
She was smiling delightfully while her rabbit ears fluttered about.
There is no way they could have produced such product, was my initial reaction.
She extended her arms and carried me.

This has to be a lie! As a typical adult, I may have a small frame. But for a female to easily carry me, there is no way it can be that easy!?

Not only she was carrying me so easily, but also swayed me in order to lull me into a sleep.
『The rabbit-eared person is inhuman so she might not consider carrying me as a big deal』
I had also suspected that, and soon found out the real truth.

Wh, What, Heeeeey!

The shape of the rabbit eared woman, that had carried me by herself, was reflected lightly by the window glass — There a black haired infant the woman was carrying was also reflected.

"Waaaa, waaa!"

Moving my mouth, I tried to speak.
The one being reflected there was unmistakably me.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

For the sake of calming myself down, how many days here had passed?. So many astonishing events came one after another.
Calm down, stay cool… First of all, let me confirm the situation one at a time.

I woke up after being stabbed by that former bully, and I became an infant.
I was laid to sleep in a large wooden bed together with another infant.
The sleeping baby with silver hair next to me had dog-like ears comparable to the animal characters that appear in anime and manga.
Even the ears of the woman who often came to see the situation in the room was not human. She had rabbit ears.
Except animal people don't really exist. Besides, her body looks like a foreigner. While I was thinking, a fat oba-chan entered and changed our diapers and fed us milk.
The oba-chans were talking to each other but it wasn't in English, Russian, or Chinese.

"— —, —."
"–, –."

The rabbit-eared woman had entered the room, and she began a conversation in a friendly manner with the oba-chans. She lifted up the dog-eared baby next to me.
She put her hand on the baby's head.
That hand gave out a faint light.

"–! –, —"

She smiled broadly after she spoke.
Next was my turn.
She lifted me up the same way, before placing her hand on my head.

"—-…."

She looked at me with sympathy.
Without understanding the reason, I was embarrassed.

“–, —-.”
“—-! —-.”

The rabbit-eared woman and the oba-chans were talking when they left the room.
Anyway, for the sake of grasping the situation I ended up in, it was necessary to learn the language those women were using.
So, I diligently listen to their words.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Since regaining my consciousness, 1 year had passed.
I could not write or read their alphabet, but I could understand what those women were talking about.
Thanks to becoming a baby again, my brains became like a soft sponge.
Like a thirsty sponge absorbing water, I memorised what I heard.

From the words of those women, I started piecing together my current situation — my current location is within an orphanage at a small town called Hod, in the Aljio territory.
The total population of the town is less than 1000.
It really is a small town.

Aljio territory, Hod — I haven’t heard of either place before.
I think I was transported to a foreign country, but…
No matter how far this place is, people putting on rabbit ears and dog ears definitely don’t exist.

Somehow or another, during that stabbing event, it looked like I was killed, apparently.
Being reborn in a different world while still possessing my previous memories — that was my conclusion.
Otherwise, I won’t be able to explain the current situation.

The rabbit-eared woman’s name appears to be『El』. She is also the founder of this orphanage.
The oba-chans called her『El-sensei』. They also liked her.

In this parallel world, it doesn't look like it's a custom to discriminate just because you have rabbit ears, it seems.

From these women's unified conversation; about 2 years ago, soon after being born I was abandoned in a basket in front of this orphanage.
On the exact same day, I was put to sleep next to a dog-eared baby. It looked like that baby was also abandoned.

2 years ago, huh… Now I'm 2 years old…

On a silk handkerchief in the basket,『Lute』had been embroidered.
It looks like『Lute』is my name.

I was struck by a feeling close to resignation.
I had looked away from my acquaintance when he was being bullied; I gave him up as a scapegoat for the sake of saving myself.
What I did also took part in driving Tanaka into suicide.
I had been surrounded by that sin. To be killed by the main perpetrator of that bullying, to be born again and then to be abandoned by my parents becoming an orphan.

The very meaning of retribution.

…For this reason, I was determined.

I will become strong in this world with this life. I will have the courage not to flee away from disasters. And if a person needs help, I will absolutely help them out. I will do acts of mercy so that I, who abandoned Tanaka and was killed for it, can atone for those actions…

Thus I, formerly named Hotta Youta — now Lute, decided to live my life this way.

Chapter 2

I, Hotta Youta, in this parallel world, had become a 3 year old『Lute』.

Also, I finally learned how to walk and talk.
I wanted to go outside the town to look around but the orphanage rules prohibited me.
That would only be allowed once I turned 7.

On the other hand, walking around the orphanage was possible.
Every morning, it was decided that I would receive lessons from El-sensei in one of the large rooms at the orphanage.
El-sensei gathered the orphanage and town's children and taught them reading and writing, arithmetic, this world's history, and common etiquette.
So that's why the oba-chans adoringly refer to her as teacher.

Math aside, living in this world required you to learn reading and writing, and, of course, general knowledge.

The children taking the class were of an age around first year primary school students.
Since I was quiet, I was the only 3 year old child sitting in the back where I was not punished to stand in hallway.

Math — I had no problems with the basic four operations.
My outward age is 3. But inside, I'll be 30 this year.
By the time I became a hikikimori, I had already mastered those four basic mathematical operations.

I was able to memorize without any difficulty the alphabet they used in reading and writing. Maybe it was because I was in growing up phase, or was reincarnated, or the combination of those two.

From the history lesson, I received details on how this parallel world came to be.
Because the entire lesson took a day to end, the rest became summarized.

Approximately 100,000 years ago — a god, named Tenjin-sama, created both the celestial world and the surface world, and governed in peace.

But one day, 6 Dai Maou stole the secret art from Tenjin-sama which was referred to as manipulating belief or Shinpou.
The Dai Maous were able to manipulate Shinpou and degrade it into magic. Soon after, they escaped to the surface world.
And then, the 6 Dai Maou conquered the surface world using the power of magic.
However in the 5 large continents where the 5 races live, heroes had risen; the secret art for magic was taken back from the Dai Maous. And the magic had been restructured in order to deal with them.
And because of the emergence of those magical heroes, five of the Dai Maous were defeated and sealed.
But the last of the Dai Maous had allegedly gone into hiding while holding his breath at the Demon Continent.
However, thanks to the heroes from the five races, peace had finally arrived in the surface world.

That was the summary of this world's history.

100,000 years… The history of the previous world's humanity began about 7 million years ago. Even so, if you were to compare them, isn't there a large time difference…?

The 5 races that the heroes came from are from the different races in this world. They're from Human, Fay, Beast, Dragon and Demon.

The Human race looked similar to me. In this world, they were the most populous.
The Fay race were referred to elves, dwarfs, fairies and other such creatures.
The Beast race had non-human ears similar to El-sensei. They also had noticeable beastly characteristics. On the other hand, the Dragon race resembled the appearance of a human but had a dragon horn on their head. Among the 5 races, they had the most pride in their clan.
And lastly, the Demon race. Those who can't be classified from other four races were usually classified from this race.

Those heroes are now popularly called『Heroes of the Five Races』.
They are often used in epic stories and fairy tales.

Next is general knowledge.
We learned in history that Magic was taken back from the Dai Maous.
But in order for me to deal with the inhabitants in this world, I'll become someone who manipulates magic.

People that could handle magic in this world are called 『Magicians』.

Because of the history on how the Dai Maous were defeated and sealed, the social status of Magicians are quite high.
Naturally, Magicians also exist in all sorts of ranks.
If the rank is high, then their influence also increases.

These are the rankings:

SSS rank

SS+ rank
SS rank
SS- rank

S+ rank
S rank
S- rank

A+ rank
A rank
A- rank

B+ rank
B rank
B- rank

C+ rank
C rank
C- rank

B+ rank is the limit most common people can reach.
A rank is only reached by a handful of people called『Prodigies』.
The existences that reach S rank are referred to as『Inhuman』
『Fiend』『Freak』.
The existences that reach SS class are referred to as being in Maou class.
Reaching the God's domain, the SSS rank, is referred to as『Shinpou』
or God's Technique.

Fundamentally, children referred to as『Talented Magicians』were
those that held B- rank magic and above.
Their latent magical capacity could be sensed from the outside.

An individual's effort and affinity depends on their dedication to spiritual improvement. However, there is no alternative for those holding B rank magical capacity; even those that moved to A-rank and S rank were seemingly like that.
However, for those holding C+ rank magical power, they won't reach B-rank even if they're not capable. That's why it was still necessary to practice magic in order to go beyond the standard.

If one became a rank higher than B-, they're basically winners; they can choose whichever job they want especially those high-paying ones.

「From the time they are born, winners are already separated from losers….」

Furthermore, people that are judged as losers do not become more than B- rank as written in history.

In this harsh world, juniors surpassing seniors is basically impossible.

For that reason, royals, aristocrats, and old lineages, disliked the tendency of having to marry with the exception of magicians.

High-class magicians marry for the sake of increasing the probability of giving birth to more talented children. These is the reason why the magical capacity of the old lineages, nobles and the like are fundamentally high.

You can roughly divide magics into four separate categories.
1: Attribute Magic
2: Void Magic
3: Healing Magic
4: Support Magic

Attribute magic is, quite literally, manipulating a source of an attribute like changing it into fire.
Void magic is offensive magic without attribute magic. It is identified as manipulating magic itself.
Healing magic is magic that cures injuries mainly by operating within the body. In certain games it's called white magic.
Support magic is defense, movement buffs and so on. With the exception of offensive magic, it is everything else lumped together.

By the way, El-sensei's magician's rank is B+ rank.
However, her specialty is healing magic.

I approached El-sensei to ask about something after the classes were over.

「El-sensei, can I… ask you something?」
「When there was something you did not understand during class, you immediately would come to ask. Although you are still small, you sure are a hard worker, aren't you, Lute?」

While giving me a smile that made me warm and fuzzy inside, she gently stroked my head.

「It's not something I don't understand in the lessons. But… I want to confirm whether I have talent to be a magician.」
「Ah….」

Her hand suddenly stopped stroking me.
The question was like『Where do babies come from?』when asking your parents; such awkward atmosphere.

Ehh? Did she hear it right?
「That… errr… right… Lute… you don't have talent to be a magician….」

El-sensei, after hesitating, answered resolutely.

「I already confirmed it when Lute was a baby. There's no doubt about it.」
When I was… a baby? Hmm… Ah, I see! That time when you carried me and placed your hand on my head, you had a seemingly sad expression… So that was the reason!

The face I showed her after understanding what she said, she misunderstood it as shock.
El-sensei gave me a lap pillow, as she matched my gaze and tried to make me understand by talking in a serious tone of voice.

「Even if you don't have any talent as a magician, don't be sad… Becoming a magician isn't the only important thing in this world….」
「Sensei has already seen many people and watched over many children in the orphanage. Like you, Lute, even though they were not talented as magicians, they have become successful traders, craftsmen, and things like that. Those kids still discovered happiness despite not becoming magicians. Although you were not blessed with talent, don't be disheartened and lose your way. Those that failed to come to terms with reality ended up with miserable lives…. 」
「Lute… I know you are a good child, that is why… You have to plan your life in a way that properly matches your ability, understood?」

『Because you were not blessed with talent, come to terms with reality, set up a plan for your life that matches your ability』 to a 3 year old baby, is that the normal thing to say?

No, guys who act reckless will ruin their body even though they know they don't have the talent.

「Umm… Sensei, For the sake of my curiosity… What rank is my magical capacity?」
「Ah, that's right… About C rank」

C rank, isn't that the second position from the bottom?
El-Sensei, without restraint, told me resolutely.
『It would be good if you gave up on trying to be a magician』 I think that was what she meant.
I acted innocently as I responded to her.

「I guess, I don't have any talent… Sensei says so… I think I will walk a path that isn't one.」
「That's a good boy! Well then, because Sensei still has lots of things to do, I'll be going now.」
「Sensei, thank you for answering my question.」

El-sensei stood up, stroked my head and left the room.

I have no talent as a magician… Normally, in such reincarnations stories, the main character has talent, training their magical power from the time they were a child and receiving a enormous magical capacity and other benefits. Isn't that the way it's supposed to be?

In my previous life, I had been killed by the main perpetrator of my bullying. I had been reborn and then abandoned by my parents. Furthermore I was also told that I had no talent. Surely, it's "an arrow to the knee".

For the sake of helping others and also for my own protection, I need to get stronger, after all, not becoming a magician in this world is… severe. Also, I'll become something a bit more grand and do fencing and Kenpou and things like that. But, where will I find someone to teach me?

It can't be helped. Those without talent will always be jealous and envious.
I resolve myself for an alternative plan.
However, in class the next day, a ray of hope appeared.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

In General Knowledge class, lessons concerning magical devices were taught.

An ordinary person can't possess magical power… But there is a way to utilize magic.
And that is by using『Magical Devices』.
Magical Devices are identified as, all devices endowed with magical energy.

A sword with magic energy inside becomes sharper, armor acquires resistance to things like fire, footwear will make you swift like the wind, et cetera — magical devices are very diverse.
Naturally, magical devices are more expensive than ordinary weapons.

Like that, in the explanation of the magical devices, there was a truly interesting subject.
『Magical Liquid Metal』
An item obtained by killing a monster called metal slime.

Magical Liquid Metal is a special metal having a unique characteristics; distributing magical power while coming into contact with it and having a mental image of the weapon will transform it to that very shape.

The advantage of this is that if it's in small quantities, it's easy to carry.
For that reason, it's used as a magical tool of choice for assassins.

The disadvantage is that once it's fixed into a shape it will never again return back to magical liquid metal
It's said that unless you picture the image clearly; if you make a sword, it will be blunt; if you make an armor, it will not only be uneven, but also the size would not match.
Restricted to use, cumbersome, and expensive.
An item that is also referred to as a classic example of an unpopular commodity.

Suddenly, a Newtype sound – ran through my mind.

A gun using magical liquid metal — it is possible to make a handgun, right?

This world's metallurgy technology is not that great, but if it's something close to an arquebuses, they might be able to craft it.
However, those guns could only shoot one shot per round while using 『Muzzle-loading Style』.

When the day I fight this world's magician comes, I'll be using modern arms — even if they are small like revolvers, it will still be necessary.

『If I manufacture parts using this magical liquid metal, shouldn't I create handguns with a modern design?』 I thought in such a way.

It's worth a try.

I immediately wanted to buy and make some to test it but I don't have money.
I don't even have the advantage of studying magic. Whether 『Flowing Magic Power』 is literally or not, I don't even know.

It's not particularly necessary to become a magician, right? But it was necessary to study general knowledge about magic.

I, from this day onward, was branded as a 『Magician without talent』.
However, I was determined to study magic.

Chapter 3

Lute, 3-years old.

Walking, hearing conversations, and reaching the point of understanding them. The circumstances of this orphanage he was also able to understand a great deal about it.
El-sensei, a rabbit from the beast tribe, opened this orphanage for

personal reasons.
For what reasons she opened this orphanage, I did not understand.

As of now, there are 18 children including myself living in this orphanage.
Every year, the amount of children increases at a pace of 2-4.

In a war that broke out before I was born, it seemed that the pace would increase by many, occasionally by up to 10 people in a year.

If that were the case, then one would assume the orphanage would also lack food to eat for each day, and the children would have depressed expressions. The economic conditions were bad, but by no means were the children needy.
The reason was that El-sensei was an excellent magician, so they didn't have to go hungry.

For the sake of this small town without a doctor.
El-sensei acted as a substitute, and with the use of magic cured the townspeople.

And also gathered the town's children and taught them reading, writing, arithmetic, history, and common etiquette from the home school she opened.
Furthermore, she also instructed children with talent as magicians on the basics.

She amassed so many favorable relationships that the townspeople, out of gratitude, would contribute to the orphanage, and often women would take the initiative to help out in the orphanage as volunteers.
Thanks to her contributions the children ate without worry.

With that said, it doesn't mean the children did nothing.
4 year olds, looked after the younger children, 5~6 year olds during the day, studied the alphabet, reading, arithmetic, history, and general education. And after finishing, with the exception of sweeping, laundry——-cooking, were in charge of the chores.
When they turn 7 years old, they would receive simple jobs from the

townspeople.
Weeding the fields, gathering the harvest, transporting the wheat, handling the poultry, sweeping the shops, etcetera.
A portion of that went to the orphanage.

Those that raised money, when they were 7 years old, left the orphanage.
They became merchant's apprentices, craftsman disciples, maids-in training for the wealthy, etc.
Leaving the orphanage by the time you were 10, and getting a job became an unspoken rule.

I was immediately judged as [Having no talent in Magic]. But, I'm not particularly pessimistic.
[Despite having trouble in this parallel world, and not having the chance to fire off flashy magic due to bad luck.] just that much is fine.

Besides, If I use the magical tool, magical liquid metal it's likely that I can manufacture guns in this world ——— handguns. So, I plan to study magic to the extent that I am able to produce handguns with the magical liquid metal.

Just like when I was practicing the alphabet among other things in class; I had also started openly attending lessons on the basics of magic.

Naturally, I could start attending class at the age of 7.
Typically, even if you were to practice at an age less than that, the body wouldn't be ready yet, so it will inevitably be a burden—- I had those thoughts.

Character writing class was in the morning.
From midday to afternoon the basic magician class is held in the orphanage's back yard.

In the afternoon, I watched as the lesson moved toward a corner of the backyard.
El-sensei had an expression that seemed to say she wanted to run away, she had the same expression in the character writing and other classes,

though it is easy to overlook since she doesn't make a fuss and is quiet about it.

In front of El-sensei, students studying the basics of magic are lined up. There is one child from the orphanage, and two from the town —- three in total.

The orphanage's older generation left, to officially be taught magic at a higher-level magic school, those in the class who have talent are rare and few in number.

Under El-sensei's instructions, first is warm-up exercises.
Running around the building.
Muscle training.
And after a break, we train in hand-to-hand martial arts.

The martial arts in this world focuses on strikes and throws.
The martial art being taught is similar to wrestling and kickboxing.

After another break, fencing is next.
Holding a wooden sword, only doing practice swings.
After a while a fellow pupil partnered with El-sensei and did *randori*.

According to Sensei, those who have talent as a magician are also first rate fencers and martial artists.
Even though there seems to be the possibility of being defeated by a magician without using magic but with their sword or fist, I still didn't give up and earnestly did this training.
Seems like the magician is unexpectedly physical.

Again, another break.
After that, there was even more magic training.

First of all,assistance magic (body reinforcement technique).
Magic that raises the hidden physical power of the body with magical power.

The body reinforcement ended, next was defending against enemy attack magic only through the use of defense processes――― the practice of making a defensive stance.

These two are required techniques for magicians.
Defensive stances are especially dangerous because it is based on instinct, if it can't be deployed in an instant it'll be useless in combat.
The other pupils are also suffering for the sake of learning defense magic, everyone's practicing with all they have.

Lastly, more attack magic.
I intently inspected them from inside,under sensei's guidance the pupils started the beginner attack magic practice.

[Burn in my hand weapon of fire! (Flame Lance!)]

In accordance to sensei's yell, a one metre flame spear was made from thin air.
It was still a long way to go, not just in number, but manifestation delay, speed, and power.
Everyone practiced attacks to the limits of their magical power.

Furthermore, next year we will begin practicing chantless magic.

The way to do it is—if you clearly imagine the attack, shape, and power; use about twice the magical power than usual; and point your emotions at the enemy, the magic will be invoked.

If you compare it to normal magic, chantless magic comes out slower, has less power, and has larger magic power consumption.
It is a skill that is full of demerits. However, there are a lot of situations where you can't use normal magic, where you can't use your voice.
In those situations, whether or not you can use chantless magic means the difference between life and death.
That is why this is a required subject.

These are the particulars of a magician's basic training.
By listening to the lectures from a corner of the backyard and looking at

their way of doing it, I got the general gist of it.
A young priest reading unlearned scriptures before the gates—isn't it?

While in class, I immediately started practice by myself.
First is defense formations.

(According to El-sensei, "Imagine a wall made with magic. Put in the feeling of rejecting and resisting the enemy's attack, that way you can successfully make it", is it?)

In other words, an AT ○ield, right? Got it.

"*inhale*, *exhale*, *inhale*, *exhale*"

Breathing repeatedly, I closed my eyes.
Concentrating my mind, I recalled the movie Evan○○lion, and strengthened the image.
I opened my eyes, and shouted!

"AT ○ield, open!"

A lightly shining diamond-shaped defense formation appeared before my eyes.

"Ooh! Yahoo! I did i~~t!"

I felt a lethargy like having my soul pulled out by a death god.
The latter part of my shouts of joy became slow, cracked, and disappeared.
Like the time I was killed by the chief bully, my consciousness fell down a dark, bottomless hole.

The next time I opened my eyes, I was laid down on a futon in the nursery.
According to my silver-haired female childhood friend Snow, I learned to make a defense formation by watching.
But not knowing moderation, I used up all the magic inside my body, pooped my pants, and fainted with my eyes turned white.
El-sensei who had noticed the accident interrupted her lesson and came

running in confusion.
It seems a volunteer auntie washed my soiled ass and underwear, then changed my clothes and laid me down on a futon.
The childhood friend also got angry at me.

“That is a no-no! Lute-kun is making trouble for Sensei!”
“Sorry, sorry. I’ll be careful next time”

I already thought up countermeasures.
I won’t make the same mistake twice.

I was called over by El-sensei who had noticed me waking up, and was gently scolded.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Failure, failure☆!
On the inside I am an adult, but since the outside is a child I was forgiven right!

Even though I got scolded, I participated in magician’s basic class without punishment.
El-sensei and the students made a difficult face but the other party is a three-year old.

Of course, I don’t intent to join class without any countermeasures.
Based on last time’s failure, I already emptied the contents of my bowels at the toilet.
Even if I run out of magic power, this time nothing will leak out.
Perfect.
With a resolute expression, I once again joined special training.

I watched body strengthening arts practice.
Two townspeople joined in lessons with the first years.
They were having a light game while doing their body strengthening arts.
El-Sensei is in charge of the orphan who had just started joining lessons this year.

“Cover your body more uniformly with magic power. Being unbalanced only uses up your magic power, it’ll soon be used up”
“y, yes. I’ll do my best”

The beginner student responded to El-Sensei’s instruction with great effort.

Watching the conversation between the two, with El-Sensei’s advice as reference I tried doing body strengthening arts.

(umm…… “Cover my whole body evenly in magic power”, is it)

In other words, Hu○ter×Hu○ter’s Nen○Power right? Got it.

“Suu~, Haa~, Suu~, Haa~”

Cycling my breath, I closed my eyes.
Concentrating my mind, I recalled the part in the manga where the protagonist awakened Nen○Powers, and strengthened the image.
I opened my eyes, and shouted!

“Ha!”

Magic power like seething steam came pouring out of my body.
I tried jumping lightly, and easily flew twice my body height.

“Ooh! so this is the power of body strengthening arts! It really strengthens the body~~”

Once again a lethargy like having my soul being pulled out by a death god.
The latter part of my shouts of joy became slow, cracked, and disappeared.
Losing strength in my legs, I fell down face up just like that.

The next time I opened my eyes, I was laid down on a futon in the nursery.
According to my silver-haired female childhood friend Snow, I practiced the body strengthening arts I learned by watching.

But not knowing moderation, I used up all the magic power inside my body and fainted, fell on my back, hit my head on the rocks strewn around on the ground, bled spectacularly, became incontinent, puked, and having my throat blocked I collapsed from lack of oxygen.

El-sensei who had noticed the accident came running in confusion, and hadn't it been for her aid, I would have died.

I was called over by El-sensei who had noticed me waking up, and was scolded in a loud voice by Sensei who raised her rabbit ears.
This is the first time I've seen El-Sensei so angry.

Even though on the inside I am over 30 years old, I violently trembled in fear.
This is truly the fear of angering someone who's normally quiet, huh….

After the second disturbance, El-Sensei directly forbade me from Magician's basic practice.
As expected, being disturbed twice is unpleasant.
However, I'm allowed to join if it's reading or writing, since I could do it without disturbance…….

My magician lessons ran aground on a rock.

Chapter 4

ute, 4 years old.

Johann Cruyff, former soccer representative of Netherland, said,『The foundation of it all is ball control. If I can't control the ball then I will run after the ball in another sport.』

So rather than using magic, I decided I will start to train to control my Maryoku.

But after becoming 4 years old, you needed to look after the younger children.
Conversely, it means I was permitted to do what I wanted after that.
There were three 2- to 3-year-old boys and girls we had to take care of.
And we four 4-year-olds had to take care of them daily.

We were expected to keep them company at the『Nursery』room where there were 2 to 4 year-old children sleeping.
But since all 3, except me, were girls, I let them involuntary take care of the children.
Thanks to that, I could devote myself to improve my control technique on my Maryoku.

I took up a corner of the nursery and recalled the content of El-sensei general lecture class.
El-sensei explained what『Maryoku』concretely was.

Maryoku is the energy that enters a person through soul as its vessel.
The amount of soul to maintain a body—and soul—hardly changes regardless of race.
Maryoku refers to the amount of energy which is contained in the soul except the part that is necessary to maintain the body and soul.

The amount of Maryoku also varies widely by race.

It may be as large as a lake, a basin, or as small as a cup of glass.
And if Maryoku is completely spent, the energy which maintains the body and soul will be insufficient and will cause fainting.

I will faint, since I will not be able to maintain the condition within my spirit and body once I spent all my Maryoku.

If that was the case, then I would start to grasp the total amount of Maryoku and measure how much of it could be used before reaching the limit.

I kept my eyes closed while I focus my consciousness inside.

In the center of my chest, I felt a warm clump faintly.
I imagined slowly pouring that warm light little by little to my right hand; the light moved from thecenter of my chest to my right hand.
There was neither sense of Maryoku consumption, nor fatigue, nor despondency in the body.

I tried to release the Maryoku that I collected in my right hand outside.

「Uoo….」

About half of the light was released.
The body became heavy like after a sleepless night.

Is this clump of light itself the useable amount of Maryoku?

My expectations were probably right—my intuition tells me so.

The next day.
In the『Nursery』room, the girls were looking after the younger children.

I sat at the side of the corner of the room and started my special control training again on my Maryoku.

I closed my eyes and clumsily felt the warm light inside the center of my chest.

I imagined channeling my Maryoku little by little to my right hand.
Yesterday, I didn't mind it because I only moved it to my right hand but the flow did not go straightforward.
The light was distorted like a straight line painted by a mouse.
The width of the lane was wavy and not uniform.

Is it possible to quickly send a stable amount to the point where I want it?

First, I needed to reach the point where I could freely adjust the width and straighten the flow myself.
If this became possible, then I could quickly send the necessary amount of Maryoku to the point where it was needed.

It would be fair to say that you needed to go that far if you wanted to control Maryoku without interference.

I'm fired up and rolled up my sleeves.
But the training was interrupted by the protests of the 3 girls.

「Lute-kun, you'll get scolded if you don't properly take care of the little kids with us!」

The young girl—called Snow—said that as the representative of the girls.

Her characteristics were: a shoulder-long silver hair, pure white skin, dog-ears and -tails. She was also from rare species called White Wolf tribe that was living on the Snowy Mountain of the North Continent.

She and I were childhood friends who get along very well. When we were babies, we were left behind in the orphanage at the same time.

Surprisingly in this world, there were almost no parents that leave a baby without notice behind.

In the orphanage, the children who came here are those whose parents died through illness, accident, war, etc.
It was because of Economic reasons that the other orphanage are full.

Because there were no relatives that they could rely upon, the two remaining girls in our group were brought over at the age of 3 when their parents died of illness and accident.

Snow and I, whose parents left us in front of the orphanage on the same day and were put on the same bed since we were babies, have strong childhood friendship and bonding.
Because of that, we often formed a pair of two.

While remembering that, I excused myself with a forced smile.

「I want to help you all very much but the way you you did is so good that I didn't get a turn. That's why I was sitting in a corner so that I won't get in the way.」

They were really good at comforting the children.
And children were already sleeping comfortably in the bed.

Snow came with unyielding big eyes near my face and pose a demand.

「If that's the case, then you can help playing house. We have roles enough for the four of us.」
「Playing house?」

When I turned my eyes, the other 2 girls were sitting down in the middle of the room and waited.

「If Lute-kun does not play, I will tell sensei that you skipped work.」
「Even though I didn't skip it particularly… OK! Let's play together.」

I gave in when El-sensei's name came out.
I interrupted my special control training on my Maryoku and sluggishly got up.

「So which role should I take? Father or Master?」
「Lute-kun, you'll take the role of a pink slime pet!」
「Is that really necessary…?」

I blurted out my reply.

On that day, I continued saying『purupuru』until the girls "released" me.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

I was made to play house with the girls three days consecutive after doing the role of the pet.
During those days, either I took a pet role as a 『Black and White Rabbit』『Long Bearded Weasel』『Paradise Parrots』etc.

One time, I objected the role of a pet.
But was bluntly overruled.

They play house as noble ladies.
Raising a pet was a fashion sense for the wealthy. That was why they insisted the role of a pet was necessary for me.

A man cannot win against a woman using his mouth whether in the previous world or in this world.
Furthermore, the other party I lost to had three members.
Even though my mental age was over 30, there was no way I could win against them.

But even though I was obediently following them, it did not mean I was being pushed around by those 4-year-old children.

When there was time, I went to the dry river bed near the orphanage and gathered flat stones.
I painted one side with black ink and dried it.
I took an unneeded wooden board and carved a grid of 8×8(64 boxes) on it with a knife.

The 4th time playing house.
The girls requested the usual—the role of a pet.
This time, I came up with a certain condition.

「If any of you manages to defeat me in a game I made *using the knowledge from the former world*, I will keep the role of the pet.」

『Reversi』was laid before them.

「「「Lute-kun?」」」

The girls voice were in unison as they tilted their head.
Using the board and stone pieces I made, I explained the rules of Reversi to them.

Among Japanese people who knew the game Reversi, there was nobody who did not understand the rules.

It was simple and easy to memorize.
That was the reason why I chose Reversi from the several board games back from the previous world.

As planned, the girls were memorizing the rules immediately.

The first to challenge me was Snow.
Of course, she chose white.

「Snow, you take the first turn.」
「If I beat Lute-kun, he will be doing the role of a golden MaruMaru today.」

What the heck is a golden marumaru…?

Snow is joyfully painting over the black ones.
First, I let her change the black stones to white so that she took some credit.

「Lute-kun, you are we~ak! Even though you made it yourself.」

Snow got caught up in the moment and was under the assumption that she was winning.
The dog ears were twitching proudly.

「Hahaha. Snow, make it funnier if you are going to tell a joke. Snow still can't do addition and subtraction, how can I lose in this game of intellect?」
「Muuu… I have a feeling I'm being made fun of… Fine! If Lute-kun loses, he has to listen to another order besides being a golden marumaru!」
「As you wish… But if I win, I'll touch your fluffy dog ears and tail to my hearts content!」
「It's not dog ears! …It's wolf ears! Because Snow is from White Wolf tribe!」
「I know… and don't forget the promise.」

『*deep breath*』Snow who got angry a while ago regained her composure and focused her look at the surface of the board. As usual, she changed black pieces without thinking.

Snow had misunderstood.
Those who had the most same colored pieces are the winner in Reversi.
There's no point in boasting in the amount of your pieces in the middle of a game.

I had to switch to counter-attack since the white stone were already dominant.
A corner was seized by me and the white stones were changed to black.
Since a corner was seized, Snow could no longer change the color of the stones at that side anymore.
In an instant, black stones dominated the board.

「Uuuu… I lost…」
「Yeah, I won! Don't forget the promise, okay?.」
「I know… I'll let you touch it when we're about to sleep at night…」
「O-ok.」

Snow agreed while she folded her ears down and shyly looked her upturned eyes down.
The figure of her in low spirit was so pretty that I felt shy.

Hey, Snow! The way you talk feels like… you made a lewd promise to me…

「What's the matter, Lute-kun? Your face is red. Did you catch a cold? 」
「N-no it's nothing. So… who's the next opponent?」

I shook my head to drop the dirty thoughts and continued to challenge them.
Snow sulks with pouting cheeks at the edge of my vision.
I did not know the reason to why she was sulking though.

Is it because I won too childishly? Then next time, I will go a bit easier on her…

While I was pondering, I forgot there were two remaining opponents left.
Naturally, I won quite easily like against Snow.

Snow and the others requested to borrow the Reversi after the match.
They had to become strong enough to defeat me so that I could take the role of a pet in their house playing.

So that they could have their chance, I tender-heartedly lend them the Reversi.
The girls had forgotten playing house and started practicing Reversi.

As a matter of fact, Snow and the others challenged me to a Reversi game the next day.
As they practiced, their skill rose fairly well but there were no other opponents on their level they could compete with.

I dared to choose Reversi among the other games because other than 『the rules were easy to remember』, it attracted the crowds rather easily.

During my highschool days, I stayed indoors and occasionally absorbed myself in playing casual pc board games to kill time because i had no friends to play with.
Among them, Reversi was the only one where the computer opponent would no longer satisfy me and I thought to seriously attend a regular game.

In the end, I did not participate because of the fear to meet strangers.

Such 4-year-old children, who had little amount of practice, could never win against me. The girls had suffered a crushing defeat against me.
Although my appearance was a 4-year-old child as well, my mental age was about to become 31 by the end of this year!
Even if that was not the case, I was not weak enough to be beaten by a child!

Eh? Why…? Is… water flowing in my eyes?

I was challenged for a few day again but won them all lightly.
Snow and the other girls noticed the difference in ability from the games with me, and no longer came to challenge me. They had more fun playing with themselves.
After putting the children to sleep, Snow and the others were playing Reversi while alternating themselves.

Furthermore, Reversi was even popular among the children older than us.

I noticed that the imitated Reversi board and piece were often played with.

Even El-sensei and the volunteering oba-chans showed interest; the popularity was well received.
Probably because, the rules were easy to remember and was simple enough to do, and anyone could play it.

I, who was suddenly been freed from the role of Snow and others' pet, could strive again to make an effort for my secret training.
And it took about 30 days to learn moving my Maryoku quickly in a straight line like a thread throughout the body.
When I got used to it, it was unexpectedly easy.

Furthermore, there were things i noticed while training.

One thing I noticed was,『from the mass of Maryoku, it won't disappear even if a fragment were separated』.
From the mass of Maryoku, I separated a fragment and moved it to the index finger of my right hand.
Then, I moved it to my middle finger, ring finger and little finger.
Unless it was released outside the body, Maryoku will not be consumed even if it movesanywhere in the body.

This technique would also be handy if I wanted to temporarily strengthen a part of my body.

For example, if I wanted to temporarily strengthen my right arm, I needed 3 seconds to cut off a part from the mass of Maryoku and move

it to my right arm.
Then I would wrap my right arm with Maryoku.

Another thing is that,『the more strength increases, the more Maryoku is wrapped』.
However, the Maryoku consumption is high by just doing that.
In case you wanted to strengthen it moderately, you only have to use little Maryoku.

After magic control training was finished, I started to study and train the resistance formation.
What I had understood in my study in the resistance formation was: you can simply release the Maryoku in the air in large qualities like a magician with talent.
For example: if the resistance formation was made by pushing the Maryoku out of the right while using the palm as starting point, consumption could be held down rather than draining it out straight in the air.

When I found about this fact, I was amazed. The difference in the absolute amount of Maryoku from those people who are B- rank and above were a class on their own.
They could use the body strengthening technique and resistance formation without reallyworrying about it all.
Furthermore, because they could use attack magic as well, the difference in talent was clear.

I remembered during the time I was shocked to hear that Magician based classes were limited.
The overwhelming wall called talent was like a different world.

One could assume that they are also doing the method to reduce consumption of Maryoku in long duration battles.
But because of the difference in the amount of Maryoku—I was conserving it like someone who was on tiptoes holding a candle for lighting: they could freely ignore like someone who just found a 100-yen discount at the supermarket earlier.

With this, I understand the reason why people that are judged as 『having no talent』 would not be able to overcome the magician rank of B-.
The amount of Maryoku was fundamentally different.

Anyway, by pushing out the smallest amount of Maryoku at my palm, I could release and produce a resistance formation instantly.

I ended up using one year to finish this study experiment and training.

Chapter 5

Lute, 5 years old.

This morning, the regular reading, writing, mathematics, general knowledge and history lessons began.
However, I had been joining the lessons since I was 3, and was already able to easily do everything.
Because of that, I helped Elle-sensei assisting and teaching kids who were falling behind on their studies.

One of those who fell behind was, the same age as me, Snow.
She was quick at remembering how to read and write, but seemed to be poor at arithmetic calculations.

「The plate on the left has 5 loaves of bread, the plate on the right has 12 loaves. So all of them together, how many loaves are there?」
「Err… Uhm….」

Bending her tiny white fingers, she started calculating.

「Fi, fifteen?」
「Wrong. The answer is 17.」
「Uu~」

Since she turned 5, she had been tying her long hair in a ponytail.
Her dog-ears flopped sorrowfully.
It seemed that Snow was still bad at calculating things beyond what her hands allow.

While patting her sorrowful head, I consoled her.

「Don't worry! I'll be with Snow until you can do addition. But since it's Snow, you will be able to do it soon!」
「Really?」
「It's a promise… so cheer up! So… I'll bring out the next question… The plate on the left has 3 loaves of bread, the plate on the right has 5. So, all of them together how many loaves of bread are there?」
「Uhh, uhh… 8!」
「Correct! Snow is a genius! Excellent, excellent!」
「Ehehehe.」

According to Yamamoto Isoroku: show them, tell them, have them do it, and then praise them; otherwise, people won't do anything. Making them lose the will to learn is the absolute worst.

Let's just leave aside my splendid facade.
My real intention in praising Snow was to make her white face clearly redden.
Her tail was also happily wagging left and right.
It was so cute, I developed a habit of quickly praising her.

「Well then, I'll bring out the next question.」
「Yeah! I'll do my best so I can do addition properly!」

Snow said while innocently smiling with her whole heart.

Aaaah, so cute! I wonder if I had a little sister or daughter in the previous world they would be this cute.

Actually, what I had in the previous world was a little brother. And not to mention marriage, I was killed before I even got a girlfriend…

Just now, I once again patted Snow's head.
Not showing any signs of dislike, she narrowed her eyes with a pleasant feeling.

After having finished with the lessons, the 5 to 6 year old kids helped with sweeping, laundry, dishwashing, and cleaning the peacock cage in the afternoon.
After having finished with the chores, all that remains was free time.

During free time, i continued training on how to economize my consumption of magic in the boys' room.

Tired with practice, I thought about raising money to buy magic liquid metal.

The most plausible thing right now, was making mayonnaise.

This world doesn't have mayonnaise.
If it's that seasoning that spawned the word『mayo lover』, selling it should certainly become a hit.
There are eggs, vinegar, and oil, so making it wouldn't be difficult.

The problem was the lack of initial capital.

No money with to earn money with… the『key to the safe』, to speak off.
Opening the safe requires a key, and the key is inside the safe—something like that.

「Should I sell mayonnaise recipes to the restaurants in town?」

But the age where I was allowed to go to town was 7.
The age to start earning money was also 7.
It would not be good unless I waited for another two years… right?

As I worried endlessly about it, money-making talk dropped in from an unexpected place.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

After lunch, I was called on the way to gather firewood with Snow.

「Lute you came at the right time. I was just going to call you.」
「What can I do for you, Elle-sensei?」
「To be honest, someone came and wanted to see you Lute. Can you come to the reception office?」
「Umm… is it my parents who abandoned me? Or… a relative came to pick me up?」
「….」

Elle-sensei had an unpleasant face.
For some reason, Snow's face looked like she was about to cry.

It might be cold, but i did not particularly want to meet my real parents who gave birth to me in this world.
Although I lived only for 5 years, just living in this world is really hard.
I think my parents had probably some reasons for it.
So, i did not really have a grudge.

I merely asked because there was not anyone in particular that came to mind who might wanted to come see me in this world, but…

Never expecting to receive such an attitude of pity from these two, I was bewildered by their reactions.
As an adult, Elle-sensei recovered faster and began to talk.

「Lute, I didn't mean that the person who came are your parents or relatives. I'm sorry for putting in a strange way like that and making it a misunderstanding.」
「It's ok. I was only worried when i heard it. I dont think i particularly wanted to meet my parents now.」
「….」

For some reasons, Snow sadly hanged her ears and tail down.

「I'm sorry, Lute… The one who wanted to meet you is a merchant acquaintance of Sensei.」

Why did a merchant come to meet me?
Ah, right… I'd probably understand immediately when I meet up and talk with him.

「But don`t we have to gather firewood after this?」
「Since we still have a little surplus, it's good for today. Snow-chan, can you go and help the other children?」
「I understood, Sensei.」

Snow returned obediently into the orphanage according to Sensei's instructions.
I parted with Snow and went with Elle-sensei to the reception office.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

I often went in the reception office for cleaning.

There were 4 chairs around a simple table.
On a nearby office desk, there were stationeries, such as inkwells, neatly kept.
Sometimes, there were also some wild grass flowers that the kids had collected and arranged in the flower vase.

The merchant was already seated in a chair drinking tea. For some reasons, there was a Reversi set in front of him.

The set belonged to Sensei.

The grooves, making up the grid on the wooden board, were all crisp, and the stones were also perfectly formed.
A present made with feelings of gratitude for every day by the kids of

the orphanage including me; it was definitely well-made. I could recognize it with a glance since it was something I was used to see.

These two had already finished one game, the surface of the board was filled with white's victory.

I sat with Elle-sensei in front of the merchant.

The merchant was a man in his late 20s.
Having short cut light brown hair, his moustache was also shaved clean.
He gave off a sense of cleanliness.
If he was clad in a business suit and sat in a leather sofa, he would look like a『capable young IT enterprise company president』

He offered a handshake.

「Nice to meet you, Lute-kun. I am a merchant going by the name Malton.」
「My name is Lute. Nice to meet you, Malton-san」
「As Elle-sensei said, your response is reliable beyond your years.」

Well, that is because my mental age is 32. Probably older than you. Leaving those words unsaid, I replied with a suitably childlike smile.

After we exchanged greetings, Elle-sensei proceeded with the discussion.

「As I said earlier, Malton-san is my acquaintance. Today he happened to be passing through the town so he went over for greetings. But after seeing Lute-kun's『Reversi』, he asked me to have a chat with you.」
「Aah.」

Not really grasping the meaning, I gave a vague answer.
Malton talked details with a smiling face.

「I really only came to meet with Elle-sensei but I saw the other kids playing Reversi, you see. My merchant instincts shouted『This will certainly sell well!』」

Then the merchant elaborated on the reasons why he thinks it will sell.

In short—when people travel in horse-carriages, the driver, who handles the horse, would be busy, but the people inside were not.
Only an agonizing spare time is given while being jolted around.
But if there's Reversi, they can spend the time playing carefreely.

Tentatively, in this world there is a game similar to chess. But since the rules are complicated, it was mainly played by elderly upper-class men who have a taste for culture.
But Reversi had a simple rule that anyone curious could easily remember.
He declared that it would certainly be well received, even by nobles.

Malton-san wanted to buy the rights to Reversi from the developer so he called me out.

I'll examine his story on my own while verifying it myself.
But because a question sprang out, i asked.

「May i ask you a question?」
「What is it? I will listen to anything.」
「Why did you ask for permission? You could easily make it in silent and sell it.」

Copyright does not exist in this world.
While it may be true that the idea could be stolen, there was no law to be violated.
Malton smiled ironic and opened both hands.

「It's true that cheating is an everyday occurrence to merchants. But it could be easily understood that if I would steal from a child and make money out of it, i would be struck down by others in the same trade and the trust in me as merchant would receive a huge blow. Losing trust as a merchant is the same as falling to ruin.」

Malton turned his eyes that were filled with passion toward Elle-sensei.

「Moreover, I'm in El-sensei's debt because she saved me with healing magic after i was greatly injured in an accident. I cannot deceive the child of my life savior.」

I'm convinced of that reason.
But, this fellow did not just turn a passionate gaze towards Elle-sensei only because of a favor. As man, i understood that.

Elle-sensei has beauty and character filled with love so much that she opened an orphanage.
Even her chest and style is outstanding.
No man exists that would not fall for such wonderful woman.

However, I can't stand letting this riajuu (one-sidedly decided) that looks as if he would say『I am not troubled by women』take her as wife.

For Sensei, it absolutely has to be someone who is more honest, who doesn't fool around, who has more financial strength, and a trustworthy person whose character is not inclined to violence.
It's also inexcusable to do ecchi things immediately after going steady.
I won't even allow hand-holding.
It has to start with a date, together with me joining in.
Then I will confirm sensei's and her partner's compatibility.
If he does not meet my expectations, he is rejected.

Once they've been going out for a year, then I'll allow holding hands.
Of course, that's only when I'm present.
If he does it at any other time, I'll tie him up and separate him from Sensei! Absolutely!

—That was the conclusion I had gained from the『chronicles of when a husband candidate goes out with Sensei』that had been going round my head the most in my life 5 years after I was born.
It felt as if I was her father.

If I refuse him on the matter of Reversi, he would come to the orphanage over and over again to get closer to Elle-sensei… With that as an excuse, it would be troubling.

I said my conclusion with a bit of hesitation.

「I… understand. I'll sell the rights to Reversi to you.」
「Thanks! Lute, you won't be making a mistake in trusting me.」

I only sold it to you because you're going to go back and forth over and over again to get closer to Elle-sensei and will be a bother. But of course, I did not say that out loud.

Malton continued talking in a good mood.

「Although you are Reversi's developer, you're still 5. Will it be okay to leave the contract confirmation and signing to Elle-sensei?」
「I understand. Certainly, it's not right to leave it to a 5 year old child.」
「On my pride as a merchant, I assure you that the royalties for Reversi and the contents of the contract is fair and without falsehood. However, if Sensei has any complaints regarding it please tell me right away. The two of us shall spend time together and work out the details.」

Yo, do you be thinkin I be bout ta forgive you if yo ass is goin ta be ridin' solo wit mah Elle?!? Don't git carried away or I be bout ta punch all up in yo' ass ta yo' back of yo' teeth!!!

I yelled an Osakan-Yakuza like lines in my heart.

「No, I'm not worried. I have faith in Malton-san after all.」

Elle-sensei answered with a soft gentle smile.

「Well then, by noon I will prepare the money and the contract document. Then—there's one other thing I wanted to talk about, is it all right?」

Malton asked Elle-sensei for permission.
She nodded silently.

Don't even think of saying something like "let's get married"! That will be a declaration of war! Elle-sensei is not so cheap as to be handed over to some nobody who popped out of nowhere like you!

「If it's okay with Lute-kun, would you like to come with me as an apprentice?」
「…Eh?」

Receiving a reply outside my expectation, my mind lagged a bit.
Malton seemed to interpret my reaction as surprise at receiving an unexpected fortune.
With the composure of an adult, he continued with the explanation.

「I heard about you while playing Reversi with Elle-sensei. You have shown excellence since you were small, the first genius from this orphanage. At first I thought, "you've gained sensei's favor, huh", but I felt there was something more than that when I talked with you. If you study under me for ten years, you're going to go places in the mercantile world. So, won't you become my apprentice?」
「Merchant… is it?」
「Of course, I'm not going to force you. But, you have that talent. It's me who said it so there's no mistake.」

The merchant declared that with total confidence.

Hearing those words, Elle-sensei put on a worried expression like a mother during a parent-teacher meeting.

「If I'm not mistaken, Malton-san's specialty is in magical devices, right? Truthfully… Lute-kun has had an interest in magic for a while but no talent in it. With that as trigger, if he starts developing a dangerous admiration for magical devices….」

「That's all right. I will rein that in myself. Furthermore, I had also wanted to become a mage when I was Lute-kun's age. Excitedly exclaiming that 『I am going to be like one of the Heroes of the 5 Races』. Though, I was immediately discouraged since I had no talent. But I didn't give up and took up work related to magical devices like

this. Rather, I consider that frustration as the key to my current business successes. In fact, after hearing that I, wanted to have Lute-kun as my apprentice even more.」

「Malton-san is a specialist in magical devices?」
「That's right Lute-kun. How about it? Did I awaken some interest to become a merchant in you?」
「If that's the case, do you deal in『magic liquid metal』!?」

A complete change from my unchildlike quiet attitude earlier.
I leaned on the table with stars twinkling in my eyes.
At my change, Sensei and Malton exchanged glances.

「Of course I do, but….」
「Can I sell Reversi's rights for some of those now?」
「About the amount, how much do you want?」
「As much as you have.」
「 …Right now, I have a whole barrels in my shop, but to sell that for these rights…」

Malton immediately compared the profits from Reversi with the magic liquid metal and replied.
After selling Reversi other people will immediately imitate it.
This is a world without copyright after all.
So even though he could sell it, it was not going to earn him big money.

「Then I'll give you ideas for improving my Reversi, and the way to be able to monopolize its sale. Please append the fees for those ideas to the contract.」
「Ideas for improving Reversi a side, is there a way to monopolize sales!?」
「Yes, there is. First, contact some well known noble, royalty of a small country, or some elite member of society. In exchange for a cut of the profits, have them brand an official seal on the Reversi board.」

「Official seal?」
「Having an official seal shows the support of a well-known person. With this, even if someone can make fakes, their numbers will decrease

sharply. At any rate, forging an official seal means committing a crime.」

In comparison to having a criminal record, making forgeries isn't just worth it.
Furthermore, there's the danger of being discovered in one shot when prompted to confirm.
There are no merchants who wanted to get involved in that, I think.

「I-I see certainly if it's like that….」
「There are other benefits too. Publish the fact that a well-known person uses it. Then, everyone will want to buy Malton-san's Reversi. If a famous person uses it, people will have more faith in it. Above all, it's human nature that they will want to own the same thing.」

In other words, it was a proposal to『create a brand』.

According to a certain well-known person,『A brand is a tool to aid people who don't understand what is a『good thing』in making a decision』.

Although the concept of『brand』is weak in this world, it's not hard to propagate. Next, I propose some points of improvement for Reversi.

「Firstly, if you market it for use when travelling inside a carriage, the board must be made out of cloth so as to not interfere with the luggage. The cloth for the board will have grid lines drawn in black thread, the pieces will be sewn together from black and white cloth with a not-so-sharp slipstitch on the surface.」

「For the rich and well-paying clients: the board must be sturdily made with legs attached. The stones must also be made out of marble flakes while the black and white sides each prepared separately in a single color—that would make it feel extravagant.」

「For common folks: the board made should be 2~3 centimeters thick while the middle is cut down in half. Attach metal hinges at the bottom side so it can be folded. The reason for this is because it won't be a hindrance in small houses. And don't forget to change the materials for

the pieces into wood. It's easier and less expensive to mass produce compared to making it out of stone.」

「Also, if you use wood, you can make the pieces not only in square shapes, but also hearts, clubs, stars and such for special editions and limited editions. Furthermore, there are not only symbol shapes, but also pink slime, black and white rabbit, or other animal shapes. The colors are also not limited to black and white, but you can also make red, pink, or blue and white ones. In addition, wrapping it in a sack so it couldn't be seen, concealing which secret edition is contained inside—」

「W-wait! I'm putting the ideas together in a memo! Wait a little bit!」

Malton, without even a shred of his adult composure earlier, took out a memo, pen, and inkwell in confusion.

Even though he was in front of Elle-sensei, he put down the ideas raised since a while ago in a memo while breathing roughly in excitement.

Different from several minutes ago, the color in his eyes changed as he took out a memo and jotted down on it. I gave off an excellent mature atmosphere waiting for him.

As I thought, this guy is no good. He's not gentlemanly enough to be Elle-sensei's partner.

When it was good to interrupt him, I called out.

「Is this still not enough for the magic liquid metal?」
「N-no, it's quite enough… If the plan goes well, the transfer fee earlier, for the rights to Reversi, can pay for it by itself. And Lute-kun, you need Elle-sensei's consent before you can use all the money you've earned, right?」
「Thank you for the pleasure of having business with you. The payment will include the method to monopolize Reversi and ideas for its improvement.」

What comes after is the scary part of having bad loans to merchants.

「In that case, there's no problem if the ideas for other the toys, besides Reversi, are put in a separate proposal, right?」
「…Are you sure you're really a 5-year-old kid?」

As if being in the presence of something beyond his knowledge and common sense, Malton asked me timidly.

On the other hand, Elle-sensei simply became flustered at my machine-gun speech and Malton's sudden change.
Covering for Sensei who became like that, I delightedly arranged the contract contents, money amount, and magic liquid metal delivery time.

Chapter 6

During the night after I talked with the merchant, Malton.
I slept on a futon in the boys room which was spread on the floor with boys of the orphanage sleeping on either side.

「*…te…kun….*」
「*yawn*」 SFX : Fugaa~

I heard a dim pechi pechi sound near my ear and felt being slapped on my cheeks.
What I felt was too realistic for a dream.

「*Lu…Lute,n…Lute-kun….*」
「n…ga!?」
「*Shhh!!! Don't be loud. Everyone will wake up.*」

It was not a dream.
Snow looked into my face as i opened my eyes
Her hands were covered down on my mouth so that i won't let out a voice.

There are some rules in the orphanage.
The most serious crime among them is that a boy or a girl sneaks into

each others room at night.
In case it is violated, one will get one day with no meal.
And yet, the honour student Snow broke that rule and trespassed into the boys room!

I think about the reason why she trespassed into the boys room to meet me.

…Could it be that Snow is night crawling!?

I'm not an insensible anime character.
I'm a live human being.

I've felt for a certain time that she had been fondly thinking of me occasionally lately.
For example, she would be delighted if i gently stroke her head after we did work in the afternoon together.

Even though I was attracted to Snow, it was not towards the opposite sex.
It would be closer to the love given to a younger sister or daughter.
But if we grow up and still yearn for each other in the future, I believe… becoming lovers or marriage partners might be possible.

However, night crawling was too early at the age of 5! Besides, a girl was attacking a boy!
To make me a fait accompli at this age—Snow, what a fearful child!

Although my body is that of a 5 year old like her, my mind is that of a 32-year-old『young adult』. It seems I ought to give her some lecturing.
Snow brings her face closer and whispers in my ear.

「*Everybody will wake up, be quiet please? Okay?*」
I nodded twice.

When i nodded, Snow slowly lifted her hands from my mouth.

「*Uhm, Snow, your feelings are—*」
「*Shhhh!!! Not here or everybody will wake up… Follow me.*」

I sneaked out of the boys' room according to Snow's instructions.

There was no electricity in this world. The infrastructure for gas and water also did not exist.
As if the world was as dark as being blindfolded at night.
I continued walking while Snow led me by the hand.
It turned out that she went towards the dining room.

Starlight came from the window.
Seeking the light, we sat near the window of the dining room.
And I sat on the floor while grasping my knees.

It was warm during the day but chilly at night as expected.
Our shoulders warmed each other by touching.
Though there's also the reason of making it easier for me to listen to her whispers.

「So, what's the reason why you broke the rule and brought me here?」
「Un… you see… there is something that I really wanted to ask you….」

If the voice was this small, the people who were sleeping in the rooms would not be disturbed.
However, it is said that girls are growing faster than boys, but she might be curious about my feelings at this age.
I understood the rush since there were other girls similar to my age at my side, but at least she could have waited until the sun came up.

It's certainly true that popular guys have it hard.

I jokingly made an impression of flipping my bangs in my heart.
But Snow asked me with a dark expression.

「Um… did Lute-kun ever think of meeting with your mother or father?」
「…Eh!?」
「Like I said, do you want to meet the mother and father who abandoned you away?」

Huh? This was not a confession or a bittersweet『I want to know the feelings of Lute-kun that I love』event?
Rather, it was a serious consultation.

After giving an apology in my heart for thinking badly of Snow, I switched my emotions and asked her.

「Snow, why are you asking me this?」
「…Today, Lute-kun told sensei『it's not like I want to meet with them after all this time』, right?」

Casting her eyes down, Snow revealed her feelings bit by bit.

「Snow wants to meet mom and dad. When we meet, Snow will ask them why they abandoned Snow away. And Snow wants to live with mom and dad… Is Snow weird for thinking like this?」

Snow's circumstances were similar to mine.
On the same day, we were left together at the orphanage.

Then I declared,『After all this time, I never thought of meeting my parents』.
She herself felt,『I want to see them』『I want to live with them if I could』, I guess she was worried whether it was wrong to have those feelings.

Snow was savoring sadness she would rather not experience.
The reason I didn't want to meet my parents was because I was a reincarnated being who had drawn memories from my past life.

Wanting to know the reason for being cast away by parents, to make peace with them, and to live together is not a weird thing. It's normal. In fact, I'm the one who's weird—I could not possibly explain it to her just like that. Conversely, it would only make her more worried.

In that case, I should explain with actions rather than with words.
I changed my position from sports sitting to sitting cross-legged.

「Snow, come over here.」
「Why?」
「Just do it already.」

Urging her a bit forcefully, I had her sit on my knees.
Snow felt a bit cramped given the closeness of our bodies, but I pressed her ears to my left chest.

「Can you hear the sound of my heart?」
「…Yes, I can hear. It goes dokun, dokun, dokun….」
「People get relieved hearing the sound of heartbeats. This is because, as babies, we are raised hearing our mother's heartbeats.」

Oddly, Snow was now rolled up in a fetal position.
She closed her eyes and leaned her body against mine.

「Wanting to meet your parents is not weird. So, there's no reason to feel worried.」
「Really?」
「Uh-huh, it's true. The reason why I never thought of meeting my parents is because I have no way of looking for them.」

Humans were the race with the most populous among the 5 races.

「Just one clue: I have a star-shaped birthmark on the back of my right shoulder; I can't just show this to everyone I meet and ask them. Besides, I have no talent as a magician; it's hard to think that the parents who casted me out would come back and pick me up. So, it's clear that I will never meet with my parents again for as long as I live.」

I hugged Snow close and continued talking while patting her head.
Making no signs of resistance, she listened carefully.

「But Snow is different. Unlike me, Snow has talent as a magician. Besides, the White Wolf race is a minority that lives in the snowy mountains of the North Continent. If you go north you might find some clues there. Even so, forgive me for saying『after all this time I never thought of meeting my parents』so insensitively, 'kay?」

Throwing away children in silence was unusual.
In addition, it was a child that had talent for becoming a magician—seems like there was a good reason for it.

This might be an unpleasant way of putting it, but, if she became a magician she could earn them lots of money.
Even if they're poor, there was no reason to let go of the golden egg.
If they wanted money quickly at all cost, they should have sent her out to some childless rich and powerful people as an adopted daughter.

If for example there was one reason to send a child with talent as a magician away to an orphanage, it was cases like: both parents died, a scramble by the relatives happened, and as a result the child's heart became traumatized—they were given over to Elle-sensei's place to rehabilitate.

There were also lots of other children with talent as magicians given over to the orphanage for various reasons.

「…Snow is also sorry. Snow asked such an insensitive question without thinking of Lute-kun's feelings.」
「There's no reason for you to apologize. I was the one in the wrong, you see.」
「If that's the case, then Snow and Lute-kun are both in the wrong. So it's a tie.」
「That's right. It's a tie.」
「As an apology, Snow will tell Snow's dream only to Lute-kun….」

She slowly started reciting her own dream.

「You see, when Snow is bigger, Snow will become a magician. Then, Snow will go to the north continent to look for father and mother. Once Snow finds those two, Snow will ask why they abandoned Snow away. If we could make peace, then the three of us will live together in the same house… This is Snow's dream.」
「It's a good dream. If it's you, then it will absolutely come true….」

I took a breath and continued.

「…But if you couldn't find them or you couldn't make peace with them, Snow still has me, Elle-sensei and the kids at the orphanage. Don't forget that okay?」
「…Un, thanks Lute-kun.」

I hugged her closely in order—to transmit not just by words, but also by the warmth—to let her know she was not alone in this world.

「Is it okay to hear the sound of Lute-kun's chest a little bit more?」
「Uh-huh, you can listen all you like.」

So as to hear my heartbeat some more, Snow nuzzled her ear against my chest.
It was surprisingly ticklish.
Bathed in starlight, Snow and I continued to bring together our bodies some more.

…I wonder how much time had passed.
I separated my body from Snow.
As I returned to my room with her, I asked.

「Should we sleep together tonight, after all?」
「Lute-kun is ecchi~~.」

Eeeh, didn't we sleep together in the same futon just one year ago?
She then returned to the girls' room without turning back.

「As I thought, girls sure grow fast, huh?」

The mutterings of a middle-aged man with a mental age of over 30 disappeared down the dark hallway.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Lute, 5 years old.

The merchant Malton, who specializes in magic tools, opened a shop in the commercial city Tver.

There were several routes going between Tver and the defence city, Tallcas (so named for having tall walls and relics of the great war of old; it is the next most prosperous city after Tver in the region).
The most popular one was the central road which had a travel time of up to 10 days.

A less popular route was the road that goes through Hoad town in the Aljio region where the orphanage was.

Despite being in the exact center point between commercial city, Tver, and defence city, Tallcas, it could not be reached unless one takes a detour through the forests.
Furthermore, taking the detour to go to Hoad town means spending an extra 10 days. In other words, going town to town through Hoad required 20 days of travel time.

Because going by the central road takes half the time, there are not many people who goes through the Hoad town on purpose.
Therefore the town's population is few, and is decreasing.

The day I met the merchant Malton, I hurriedly had him write up a contract and signed it.

That was because I wanted to have that magic liquid metal as soon as I can.

According to him, it would take 10 days from now to get back to shop.
Plus 1 day of preparation and 10 days to come here, makes 21 days.
Furthermore he asked for an additional 1 or 2 days in case some unexpected situation occurred.

This was not like the world in my previous life where an order you made would arrive the next day.
I apologized for hurrying him and said my thanks.

In the afternoon, 21 days after Malton and I parted ways.
His subordinates delivered the magic liquid metal to the orphanage.

It was transported inside a cask in the horse cart drawn by 2 horned horses (horses that seems to have a horn growing from their foreheads, because of its strength it could be used to pull carts and such).
Nevertheless, just one of those weighed about 250 kg.
I truly wanted all the magic liquid metal available, but I still did not really know whether I could make handguns out of it.

Because it was so expensive, I only got him to sell me a barrel's worth.
Nevertheless, it still seemed to have cost 25 gold coins in total.

Among Elle-sensei's classes there were also lessons about money.

Based on my life experiences here, if I were to put it in terms of modern currency it would be something like『1 gold coin (100,000) = 10 silver coins = 100 large copper coins = 1,000 copper coins』.

Intuitively, 1 copper coin is worth 100 Yen.

The price of wheat for 1 day's needs is 2 copper coins (the amount of wheat for 1 person for 1 day is about 1 kg)
1 kg of wild boar pork is 3 silver coins (30,000 Yen).
About 1 liter of cheap wine is 1 large copper coin and 2 copper coins (1,200 Yen).

So by intuition, 25 gold coins is about 2,500,000 Yen. 1 liter is about 1 silver coin (10,000 Yen)
As expected, even though it was bad, it was still a magic tool.
However, because it was not a product that was in circulation much due to being unpopular, bad stock that had been stored for too long seemed to be obtainable for a cheaper price with some negotiation. Being a rare item, the price varied depending on the situation at the time of negotiation.
It was just that since what I put on offer was only knowledge, I would turn a blind eye to it.

The subordinate took the cask down from the cart and called me.

「Could you confirm that the contents isn't wrong, just to be sure?」

The lid was gracefully opened.

The cask was filled with a silverish liquid.
The mercury-looking-liquid rippled when the cask was struck.

So this is magic liquid metal.
It really is liquid, huh.

「No problem. Thank you for bringing this over.」
「No, no. This is work after all. Boss said,『here you go』.」
「Well then, please tell him, 『Thank you very much for listening to my selfish request』.」
「Understood. I'll be taking my leave.」

The subordinate took off his cap, bowed, and returned to the cart.
Done seeing him off, I raised my body strength using body strengthening arts and carried the cask to the boys' room

I quickly finished afternoon work with Snow and started experimenting on the long-awaited magic liquid metal.
I carried the cask out from the boys' room out to the field.
The testing ground was a backyard that was vacant after the magician's basic lessons were finished.

First, I tried touching the magic liquid metal.

It was pleasantly cool to the touch.
As I scooped it out with my hands, it dripped out of my palms like water.
It felt heavier than water.
Perhaps touching mercury also felt like this.

Without delay, I experimented.

I put my hand inside the cask and called an image in my head.
It was a 10 cm flat metal board.

Keeping the image in my head, I moved magical power into my hands and released them.
A feeling was left in my palms.

「Ooh, I can really do it.」

Pulling out my hands, a metal board of about 10 cm was made.

But the degree of perfection was bad.
The surface was not flat and had holes in it; the thickness was also uneven.
It was also not in a rectangular shape but crooked.
I struck the board lightly with my fist.
It seemed to be as strong as iron.

「The handling is surely difficult: more vividly image for the texture, material properties, thickness, and strength—seems to be necessary to draw the metal board I wanted to make more clearly that way.」

Rather than taking the time training for a more definite mental image to make weapons or protectors, buying them with money was faster and easier.
I understand why this stuff was unpopular.
However, I used to be a factory worker at a metalworking plant for 7 years.

「…Remember the past. …Regain the sensation.」

I put the metal board aside.
I took a breath and exhaled, concentrated, and once again filled my hands with magic liquid metal.

In the previous life, I was able to detect even a 1μm defect on a metal board just by the feeling on my fingertips.
Just by hearing the sound, I could distinguish which metal part was defective.

All of it was taught to me by the workers working at the plant; techniques that I gained at their annoyance.
Even after I died and lost my body, the skill was etched onto my soul.

Once again, I imagined a metal board and poured my magic power.

I am not making a vague lump.
For a moment, I imagined constructing the shape, whittling, arranging, and smoothing the surface. Picturing it strongly, I poured magic power into the metal.

I felt metal being created in my hands.
I pulled it out from the magic liquid metal.

「…Yeah! Success!」

A 10 cm metal board was made with a smooth surface, even thickness, and a neat rectangular shape.

「With magic liquid metal, maybe I can really make handguns!」

My chest felt the most delighted ever since I had been reincarnated into this world.

Chapter 7

Lute, 6 years old.

Most of the time since the magic liquid metal arrived was consumed in experimenting and inspecting results, by a 5-year-old kid.

Magic liquid metal was a special metal; if you imagined armor while touching it and pour in Maryoku, the metal would take on that imagined shape—it had that property.

The advantage was that it was easy to carry if you bring only a small amount.
For that reason, it seemed to be a tool of choice for assassins.

The disadvantage was that once it has been molded into a shape, it could never return to being magic liquid metal.
Unless you picture the image clearly; if you make a sword, it will be blunt; if you make an armor, it will not only be uneven, but also the size would not match.
On top of having limited use and being hard to handle and being a rare magic tool, the price was expensive.
It had become synonymous with the term – unpopular commodity.

As a result of my investigation into magic liquid metal, I realized that it was a truly splendid material.

First, the strength was proportional to the magic power poured into it.
It was possible for a paper-thin sheet of material to be stronger than a plate of iron.

When making springs, efforts like wrapping piano wire around a rod and hardening it were totally unnecessary.
Just put your hands in the magic liquid metal, and determine the size and strength by regulating the amount of Maryoku you pour in.
When you pull your hand out, you will have made a surprisingly high quality spring.

If magic liquid metal could be brought to modern society, it would not just end with revolutionizing science materials.
It would certainly be at the level of a new material revolution.
Given some time, it might even be possible to construct a simple space elevator.

Unable to hold back the excitement from the magnificence, I informed Elle-sensei who was a superior magician, but…

「Is that so…?」

I received a reply with a『even if you say something so uninteresting』nuance.

Just how unpopular is this magic liquid metal…?

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

When I turned 6, the days in which I had to do my allotted chores, in addition to assisting with morning classes, continues.

By the way, nowadays, one part of the proceeds from Reversi and other toys had been transferred to the orphanage in intervals of 3 months (90 days).
At the beginning, Elle-sensei insisted that I should be receiving this money.

But currently, I was just satisfied with getting my hands on magic liquid metal. And furthermore, by orphanage rules, I can start earning money when I am 7 years of age.
Leaving Reversi as an exception, I slightly forcibly pressed the notion that I wanted to contribute to orphanage management funds. At least, as gratitude for being taken care of.

Though I made an amount of contribution to the orphanage, there was no special exemption on my allotted chores. If I mention this I might have gotten some leniency, but of course, I had no intention of skipping work.

Neither did I want to be a bad influence on the other kids nor did I want to be talked about in secret so I always did the same amount of work—after finishing up my chores in the afternoons, handgun production began.

At first, I tried producing an entire revolver out of magic liquid metal, but it failed.

The revolver I took out from the magic liquid metal had a cylinder that would not turn, a thin barrel, and the rifling was also laughably crooked.

The parts and internal structure I had to imagine were too numerous.
Before I could pour my Maryoku, the image had already faded.
As a result, this thing was badly made.

So, I gave up making the whole thing all at once and changed my plans into assembling it from parts.

In my previous life, I was a military otaku; I had a special admiration towards modern weapons.

Also because of having worked in a metalworking plant, before being reincarnated, I often dreamed,『will I ever be able to make my own guns?』

Looking at diagrams of revolvers, automatic firearms, assault rifles and such, comparing them with the machines and technology used in the factory I work at, I felt that making them was possible that time.
It was one of my hobbies, grinning while drinking in my single room.

Now that I had my hands on magic liquid metal, making handguns was no longer a dream using the knowledge and technology from my previous life.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

I was carrying the barrel under my arm and brought it to the backyard of the orphanage.

Right now, I'm trying to make a replica of the『S&W M10』revolver model.

It was the duty pistol of choice for manythe authorized gun used by the Japanese police departments in the previous world.

Did you wonder why I did not make a self-loading pistolan automatic gun (which used the recoil of each shot to cycle the weapon)), but a revolver straight out of a western instead? There were reasons for that.

『The self-loaderautomatic one had a difficult internal structure not suitable to make for the first time.』
『A revolver has fewer parts compared to a semi-automatic pistolThere were fewer revolver parts compared to automatic ones.』
『The revolver was sturdier; Jams were a non-issue and the weapon was easy to maintain, making it suited for the Japanese police forces, who would rarely, if ever, have an opportunity to use their gun.there were no worries about bullet jammings and the maintenance was also easy(therefore it was suited for the japanese police who rarely used a gun).』
Based on the 3 mentioned points above, it was more suitable first work.

However, no matter how much simpler the internal structure of a revolver was than a semi-auto onen automatic one, there were parts that could not be made in 1-2 days even though it had fewer components.

If I had to explain why, let me first explain the history of guns.
It means to create one gun, I had used the accumulated techniques of the world before I got reincarnated and reproduced these(techniques) with my own hands in this world.

First, the gunpowder—『the Black Powder』.

By the way, let me explain the historical background: There are various theories on when and where “Black Powder” was invented, but the prevailing theory is that it was invented in China in the 6th to 9th centuries.

In those days, alchemists carried out research on elixirs of eternal youth, as one of the things produced in the process, the formula for gunpowder

was recorded in the『Zhengzhou miaodao yaolüe』which was written around the year 850.

Around the middle of the 13th century, their successors developed weapons called『Fire Lances』, consisting of a short pipe packed with gunpowder affixed to the tip of a piece of wood or bamboo. (These weapons do not shoot bullets, instead they were simple flamethrowers or flash weapons).
These were the origins of gun-type firearms.

Furthermore, in 14th-century Europe,『Touch Hole-style』guns were made.
『Touch Hole』guns were primitive guns that were miniaturized versions of artillery cannons used for taking down castle walls that worked by packing a tube with gunpowder and igniting it from a hole drilled into the tube which would fire a (stone or metal) bullet.
It was called "Touch Hole" because the gunpowder was ignited by pressing a burning metal rod through a hole.

Not long after, around the 1400s, personal handheld firearms, "Arquebuses", having the basic form of guns was likewise created in Europe. Its features were the fuse with which to ignite the gunpowder.
"Arquebus" came from the German word "Hakenbüchse" which means "pipe with hook attached".

The "Arquebus" was further improved by the addition of S-shaped fuse clamp and trigger parts, becoming the oldest type of matchlock, the S-shaped Serpentine.
A lit fuse was attached at the top part of the S-shaped metal fittings attached at the back of the gun barrel (the gun barrel is at the center of the S), the bottom part of the S (the trigger) was pulled by hand, as the lit fuse meets the gun barrel, it ignites the powder.

Simultaneously, the metal armor worn by knights were rendered meaningless by the increase in power, tactics and strategy had to change as well.

As the 15th century dawns, the age of firearms had truly began.

Prior to that gun barrels are made by setting up iron a circle and placing bindings around them (the same process as making barrels, which is why they're called gun "barrels" even now), but by the 15th century, the process became pouring bronze into a mold and casting the whole barrel at once.

Bronze is a copper (and tin) alloy, and compared to iron, it has the advantage of having a lower melting point and being softer, making it easier to cast even with lower technology (its disadvantages are that for the same reason, it becomes worn and crooked easily).

But by the 16th century, steel became available, and damascus barrels, made by heating up and forging together steel ribbons with differing carbon content (made by applying stress to the metal by striking), then rolling it around a center stick, and then heating it again and welding it, became widespread. (Through mixing and forging together several types of steel it develops a damascus pattern, or in other words, a unique wood grain-like pattern. Incidentally, the pattern on a Japanese sword is also one kind of damascus pattern.)

However, it does have a weakness. Because the gun barrel is made by rolling ribbon-shaped material, compared to molded barrels the strength is weak, and after the invention of smokeless gunpowder production declined. This is because it was unable to endure the pressure, and so the gun barrel becomes prone to breaking.

After that, in the year 1856, the Englishman Henry Bessemer made a groundbreaking invention, the "converter", and large amounts of molten steel became available. The so-called Bessemer process is a method of making steel by blowing air against molten pig iron (iron

produced by melting iron ore in a blast furnace, contains lots of impurities) causing an oxidation reaction, removing impurities. (removing by burning)

After that various alloys can be made.
The raw materials for handguns – chrome molybdenum steel. (alloy made by adding a little chrome and molybdenum to iron. High strength and also high temperature resistance. It is also used in bicycle frames and aircraft.)
And likewise, stainless steel. (steel containing no less than 10.5% chrome in iron. Having workability and endurance, it was called "stainless" due to corrosion resistance and is widely used)
Production of steels that can be adjusted for strength, corrosion resistance, and endurance was now possible.

If I were to produce modern weapons—handguns, I wouldn't plan on using black powder, but instead something stronger like smokeless gunpowder.
Therefore the strength of ordinary steel is not enough.
21st century gun barrels are almost entirely made of chrome molybdenum steel or stainless steel.

For that reason I have to build a "converter".

To say it plainly, no matter how much I remember my previous life, it is almost impossible for me right now to make it to that extent.
Effort, time, funds, talent—if I raise those there are no limits.

Furthermore, even if I were able to procure the raw materials, I would still need the equipment and technology necessary to make the parts.

Having prepared blocks in the rough shapes of the parts I want to make, I need to shape those by whittling them using a milling machine or turret lathe, "milling".
That is unreasonable, there is also the method of forging them one at a time like a blacksmith but—

Of course for me who worked in a metalworking plant, I don't have that kind of skill.

But all those problems had been settled by the magic liquid metal.

It will take shape according to the mental image and the magic power being poured.
Moreover, it will also have a strength proportional to the magic power being poured.
I think it would be able to withstand the temperature and gas pressure when firing the bullet.

There are no other materials in this world more suitable for making handguns.

Repenting the fact that I ran away in my previous life, I decided that in this reincarnated world I would never run away, and help anyone who is in trouble.
But I don't have talent as a magician.
Let alone helping people, I don't even have the power to protect the important people close to me.

Therefore as the result of my search for power—becoming aware of the existence of magic liquid metal I came to think "can I make handguns with this?"

However, even though from my point of view I had noble goals—being faced with the fact that I will be "making handguns", I became giddy.
Starting the gun making that was only a dream in my previous life made me a little excited.

In that life, I only read technical books with designs and disassemblies while drinking sake at home after work, and became jealous watching videos of people making model guns from scratch on the internet.
It had remained a dream because of the law, funds, and time.

But in this reincarnation world there is no such thing as Swords and Firearms Control Law.
The best material I could think of is also plentifully available in front of my eyes.

My dream is becoming a reality. Don't go around grinning like that—such a consultation is unreasonable.

There are still a lot of hurdles I have to jump, but rather than worries about my troubles, the joy at being able to start working is far greater. With a smile I can't close I put my hands in the magic liquid metal and stirred.

"Well then should I immediately start making handguns. …… I wonder if I should try making the cylinder first as a test"

I closed my eyes, bided my time, and imagined a cylinder inside my head—

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

After starting to make a model revolver of the "S&W M10", half a year passed.

In the morning I help El-sensei with classes and take the initiative to finish routine duties from the afternoon.
I moved to the backyard of the orphanage while carrying the barrel, which inside decreased a lot.

Everyday, during free time I make the parts little by little.
But the work to carve riflings into the (barrel) encountered troubles.

A rifling is a groove carved on the inside of the gun barrel.
It is needed in order to give the bullet rotation, to stabilize the flight, and to raise the firing accuracy.

There are two representative methods to carve these riflings.

“Button method”, carving the rifling by shaving the material off using a drill-like cutting tool called a broach.

“Cold hammer method”, covering a center stick in the shape of the barrel cavity, which has the rifling applied, with the gun material, then applying pressure from the outside to stamp the form.

There are 2 kinds as above mentioned.

I used the latter, cold hammer method.
Because this method is suited for mass production many major small arms manufacturer are using it.

To make the core stick which applies the riflings is hard labor. But if it is finished once with liquid magic metal I’m able to give riflings (to gun barrels) in large quantities.

Hence the cold hammer method was used even if it is troublesome at first.

However I had more trouble making the core stick than I’d guessed.
I made a great number of versions that I adjusted often, and endlessly looked for the most suitable results for nearly 2 months.

But thanks to my understanding of gun barrel riflings I successfully made it.
I soaked the core stick in liquid magic metall and imaged that it hangs on it and poured magic power to engrave high quality riflings in the barrel after it stabilized, I was able to make it.

Besides that there was much trouble… I made light of the revolvers inner structure that was simpler(lol) than an automatic, yet afterwards I noticed the difficulties of adjustments repeated in trial and error, I got mad over the cylinder that stopped rotating at a fixed position, but at last I was able to reproduce the structure.

And then the thing I made was prototype #1!

A solid-black “S&W M10” revolver.

I also made the front sight and the rear sight. The grip is made not of wood, but knitted metal anti-slip grips. The trigger guard, ejector rod, and recoil shield are also properly made.
Furthermore, although it’s not needed, I also carved flutes (grooves cut to reduce weight) on the side of the cylinder for show.

The metal looks like it is really heavy, but thanks to magic liquid metal’s property of “having strength in proportion to magic power being poured”, it is almost as light as a toy “S&W M10”.

When I tried shooting air, the click of the hammer and the sensation of the revolving cylinder felt good.
I shot air like this until free time is over. Switching gears, the next challenge begins.

Today I was finally doing test firings. The problem now is the bullet.

In the reincarnated world, there is no black powder, nor smokeless gunpowder.

“If I remember correctly, the way to make smokeless gunpowder is…… mixing nitroglycerin and soaking cotton in it right? Un, the hurdle is too high……”

Then, even if I could make smokeless gunpowder, packing it in bullets and when it fires the bullet comes out—it’s not as simple as that.

Because the required combustion rates for handguns and rifles are different.

In the case of handguns, they need “fast burning propellant that can finish burning before the bullet exits the barrel” because the barrel is short. Therefore, modern handgun propellants are in small granules, not fine powder like black powder.

If a log of wood and an equal mass of wood chopsticks were simultaneously ignited, which one would burn up more quickly?

The answer is obvious, it's wood chopsticks.
It's because wood chopsticks have a larger surface area.

Just like powder, granules burn quickly.
But it's not something that should simply explode.

As I think about it problems pop up one by one—but all those problems are solved in one stroke with magic power.

Magicians can convert magic power directly into fire, water, wind, electricity, earth, and so on.
Water and earth in particular could be created out of thin air. Even fire and lightning can't possibly come from the energy stored inside the magician's body. It seems to possibly be a violation of the law of conservation of mass, but even though I don't understand the process, matter and energy did certainly appear (I can somewhat deduce that energy was born out of thin air but I don't know whether it's correct).
However, no matter which "system specialization" a magician has, imaging is important for the creation of matter or energy.
In that case, being able to handle, even if only weakly, the four elements of magic "fire", "water", "air", and "earth", and having practical knowledge of gunpowder, I think I can produce a smokeless gunpowder substitute using magic power. With that thought, I repeatedly did trial and error using the magic power control technique I've learnt.

I have the basics under control. Next I should control the combustion speed using the power of imagination.

I chose the time when cylinder adjustments had been finished to make prototypes of cartridges unloaded with powder.

At first, instead of being so big that they didn't fit in the cartridge, I made ones that do not catch and fell down instead.
Right now, having finished documenting minor adjustments, work on the bullets, except the powder, had roughly completed without a problem.

I checked the memo containing the adjustment records and put in only my right hand in the magic liquid metal.

Parts composing the cartridge—the size is .38 special (9×29.5mmR).
I put magic power inside the case.
I released magic power for the powder with the image of detonation, combustion, and explosion, and again compressed and solidified it.
Careful magic power control is necessary, but I've had practice. Having safely finished the solidification, I let out the breath I unintentionally held.

In addition, I made a bullet core as the cap.
As for the metal properties, I imagined lead.
I covered the faux-lead with a thin jacket.
I put in a primer at the bottom part with magic power to induce a small explosion, and finally I covered everything and the bullet is finished.

I take out my right hand from the magic liquid metal.
A cartridge from the memories of my past life was created in the palm of my hand.
It looks no different from the real thing.

"The problem is whether the bullet will come out properly or not"

I put the cartridge in the revolver at once.
It fit in the cylinder without a hitch.

I picked up a discarded brick and set it up on a wooden box I found laying around. An impromptu target.

I set it up about 9 meters away.
I held it with my right hand and jammed it in with all my might.
I made a pose of holding the revolver in my right hand and propping it up with my left.
The basic standing handgun posture.

Though my mind is 30 years old, my body is still 6.
In preparation for the recoil, I strengthened my body with body strengthening arts.

I thumbed backpulled the hammer and with my breath held, I quietly sqeeuzed the trigger with my index finger.held my breath.
I quietly pressed the trigger with my index finger.

KABOOM!

“gukaa…!?”

It was not the sound of a gun being fired.
It was a kaboommisfire!

The revolver was blown up from the inside.

Thanks to body strengthening arts, the fingers on my right hand, which was close to the explosion, were not blown off.
My thumb and index finger were barely safe.

“It hurts so much I want to puke~”
“Wha, what was that loud noise just now! Hii……!?”

Elle-sensei noticed the sound of the misfire, and came running to the backyard in confusion.

Looking at my injuries sensei let out a small shriek.
Her face paled as if having lost blood.
Soon she ran over looking like she was about to cry and immediately checked my injuries.
She checked to make sure that there are no injuries besides my right hand.

After judging that it was not a fatal injury, sensei’s face regained its color.
Sensei stopped the kids who appeared, having noticed the sound, in a sharp voice.

“Everyone, don’t come! The older kids please take the young ones inside!”

On that order, the kids went back inside the orphanage.

“Lute-kun! Just what did you do that it becomes like this!”

While scolding me, sensei holds her hand out at me who is holding my hands while cowering.

“Light that burns in my hand, Heal!”
“…… Ooo.”

As expected from a B ranked magician.
A warm light springs forth from her hands and went to my blown-off fingers like a magnet.
The scars recovered perfectly without a trace.

“Thank you very much, sensei”
“Don’t “Thank you” me! Just what did you do to get that serious wound!”
“Well, I put too much magic power in this newly developed magic device ……”

Explaining the handgun from the beginning would be too long, it would take time to make it understandable.
Cutting down on the explanation, I made a suitable cover story.

Elle-sensei took a glance at the magic liquid metal inside the cask.

“…… I don’t understand what Lute-kun is making, but since you’re making noise and making everyone worry come along to the office for a scolding.”
“O, okay! I’ll go so please don’t pull on my ear!”

Elle-sensei dragged me by the ear just like a Showa-era mother and went back inside the orphanage.
Arriving at the office, I sat seiza on the floor.
She made me listen to a long long sermon.
Of course, I didn’t get dinner.

After being heavily questioned, I was banned from doing experiments for the next 30 days and ordered to do punishment work for making an uproar.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

30 days after that little accidentthe misfire, the ban on experiments was lifted!

While I was doing punishment work, I finished enumerating the points for reflection of last time.

The revolver misfired, but the rifling was clearly carved on the bullet core that hit the ground.

This proves that the bullet travelled through the barrel properly.

The problem was perhaps caused by the powder substitute having too much magic power and the image of the explosion being too strong.

During the black powder era, the shell casing was filled with powder. But after smokeless gunpowder was invented, the cartridge only needed to be filled with half the amount of powder.

The space that remained is called “air space”.

When typical powder is ignited, this space became a buffer to defend the bullet against the sudden increase in pressure and regulate its speed.

According to specialists, shell cases were originally supposed to only be filled with “the right amount of the right kind of powder”.
And yet from my amateur judgement, what happens if I do not consider the air space or choose the type and amount of powder when reloading (reusing) the cartridge?

The worst case—catastrophic failurea misfire.

I had polished and polished my imaging power in order to build the revolver for no less than half a year.
Because of that, the strength of the image and the magic power that I put in was too much.

When making a new revolver, I should regulate the amount of magic power and the strength of my image, also determine the right amount of powder to put in.

From now on the time for trial and error and making notes begins.

Chapter 8

Lute, age 7.

When they turn 7, the quick kids leave the orphanage and began their apprenticeships as merchant apprentices, apprentice workers, or apprentice maids.

The kids that don't leave the orphanage earn money by doing simple work in town.
Per the rules, one part of their earned money goes to the orphanage, while the rest goes into their savings.

Those savings are intended to become their starting funds for when they leave the orphanage at 10 years old.
The savings are managed by the person themselves, to speed up the growth of their sense of independence and self-management.

When I turned 7, I also intended to work in town for the orphanage and my future, but I was stopped by Elle-sensei.

I had already contributed lots of money from reversi and other toys.
If on top of that I were to work it's possible that the other kids will lose

motivation, thinking “wouldn’t it be fine if we don’t work and earn money as well”.

Regarding my starting funds for when I leave the orphanage, Elle-sensei had been putting one part of the fees for the rights transfer of reversi and other toys to the orphanage as per the rules, and putting the rest into my savings.

It seems that since I had too much money for a 5 year old, Elle-sensei made an exception and looked after my funds.
When I turned 7, she handed it over to me so I could manage it myself.

At first I declined because I was embarrassed to receive back what I’d given away, but sensei forced it onto me, saying “because it’s the rules”.

If you ask what I really think, it’s actually a godsend.
Recently, I had been wanting to have a box for storing cartridges and also a gun belt.

I bowed my head, said my thanks, and gratefully received the money.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

In this reincarnation world, there are about 360 days in 1 year, 30 days in a month.
12 months make 1 year. There are plusses or minuses depending on year, but that’s basically it.
Furthermore, in the Fairy Human Continent I live in, there are four seasons cycling spring, summer, fall, and winter.
There are some points of difference but I don’t handle heat well, so I’m thankful that it didn’t have a tropical climate.

The hot summer had passed, it's the beginning of fall.
My schedule recently is: throughout the mornings helping with Elle-sensei's lessons as usual, and in the afternoon practicing with the revolver and making ammunition.

Snow has talent in magic so in the mornings she works part-time, and in the afternoon she joins magician's basic training.

"Lute-kun!"

On my way to the test firing range through the backyard, she waved at me with a smiling face.
The happiest thing that happened to me since I reincarnated is that I got such a cute childhood friend.

Snow unpleasantly stared at the revolver hanging from the gun belt wrapped around my waist

"Lute-kun is going to experiment on magic devices again today?"
"Experiments are mostly finished back in summer. Now it's mostly practice"

After the misfire incident, she seemed to want me to stop with the magic device development.
She seems to want me to stop doing dangerous things.
But ever since that misfire incident I had been taking proper safety measures so there was never any problem again.
Yet Snow doesn't agree and cutely pouted her lips.

I halfheartedly evaded her remarks.

"If you like, I can let you touch it. If you try shooting it you will definitely appreciate this magic device's awesomeness."
"It's fine. I don't want to touch such a dangerous toy. Lute-kun also, stop carelessly making strange toys"
"It's okay already, that blunder won't happen again. I've made it nice and safe, see."

Snow put her hands on her hips and heaved a long sigh.

"Anyway, be careful okay. I'm fine since I have sensei next to me, but Lute-kun doesn't. Don't do anything reckless."
"Yeah yeah, I get it. Well then, Snow too, do your best in class"

When she turned 7, Snow started calling herself "me" when others are around.
But when it's just the two of us, she went back to calling herself by name. …… but it's cute so it's fine.

Then Elle-sensei showed up. Looks like it's time.

"Well then everyone, let's begin magician's basic lessons"
"See you later, Lute-kun. Take care."
"See you later."

My cute childhood friend saw me off.

Putting on a lustful look, I headed off to the test firing range alone.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

I walked from the orphanage backyard for 10 minutes and reached the riverside.

On the opposite side of the river there was the entrance to the forests.
Basically, children aren't allowed to enter the forests alone.
Because monsters will come out.

Monsters like to eat children's soft meat and internal organs.
But they rarely come outside the forests.
Around here there are almost no fierce monsters that come out of the forests and attack people.

I walked along the river without crossing over it.
Continuing 100 meters, I was at the test firing range.

On the side opposite the river.
I faced the steep cliffs about 30 meters in front and practiced my firing.
The ground is soft, to the extent that if you put your feet on the cliffs, dry earth will come crumbling down, so there's no danger from ricocheting bullets.

As target, I drew human shapes using a stick of wood I found.
Even if it's destroyed by rain or wind I can just draw it again.
When the water is not high, the river is not so deep, If I strengthened my body using body strengthening arts and picked a shallow spot, I can quickly go to the opposite side and back.
I don't need to make sandbags thanks to the cliffs, with that I saved some labor.

I put my luggage in a corner.

I took out my "S&W M10" revolver from my custom-made gun belt wrapped around my waist.
As a safety measure, it was not loaded with any cartridges.

I reached out to a metal case I put in the corner.
This case is also made from the magic liquid metal.

The inside of the case was tightly packed with wooden boxes.
Opening the lid, there are 36 rounds of .38 Special9×29.5mmR bullets with the primers underneath, laid down in a grid of 6×6.

I took 6 rounds from a box and quickly loaded the M10's cylinder.out 6 bullets from a box, and quickly put them inside the cylinder.
I took out another 12 and put them in my left pocket.

I held the revolver and pointed the muzzle at a human-shaped target 30 meters away.
Thumbing back the hammerRaising the hammer, I took a stand up shooting pose, aimed at the head, and shot just one bullet.

"Kuu."

As I thought, the recoil jump of the smokeless gunpowder reproduced by magic power is fit for a 7 year old's body.

I took out magic power, faintly covered the necessary parts for the firing—legs, hands, shoulders, back, and used the help of body strengthening arts.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

I fired again and again, manually re-cocking the hammerraising the hammer after each shot.

I spent all the bullets remaining in the cylinder shooting at the target's head.
There was hardly any shock compared to before.
Also thanks to the body strengthening, I could suppress the recoil, and increase my accuracy.

I pushed out the empty cartridges out of the cylinder with the ejector rod, and quickly loaded the next set of bullets.

The aim is once again the target's head.
Next, without cocking the hammer for each shotraising the hammer separately each time, I pulled the trigger.
Sounds of firing was heard in succession.

Of course, compared to the first time around, the shot grouping was worsethe bullets were more scattered.

Once again, I quickly loaded the bullets.
Thanks to repeatedly practicing body strengthening arts, I became able to quickly reload the bullets.

I released body strengthening arts for a moment.

The next practice item was quick draw.

I returned the revolver to the gun belt, eased up my body and returned to a natural stance.

“———————fu!”

I instantly applied body strengthening while exhaling at the same time!
This time I also poured magic power into my eyes.

My eyesight, reflex speed, and kinetic vision was strengthened.

I aimed at the human shape’s head on the cliffside and fired.
Aiming true, the bullet pierced as if it were sucked in.

I released my body strengthening.
I returned the revolver to the gun belt.

Again, I continued practicing my quick draw until the bullets in the cylinder ran out.

Now that the bullets I brought had run out, I made ammunition.

I gathered the fallen empty cartridges.
Holding the empty cartridges, I soaked them in the magic liquid metal I brought.

The parts that compose the cartridge—size is 9×29.5mmR. I put magic inside the case part.
Magic power for the powder was released with the image of detonating, burning, exploding smokeless gunpowder, then it was compressed and solidified.

In addition, I made a bullet core as the cap.
As for the metal properties, I imagined lead.
I covered the faux-lead with a thin jacket.
I put in a primer at the bottom part with magic power to induce a small explosion, and finally I covered everything and the bullet is finished.

If the magic liquid metal runs out, there is still the remaining payment for reversi and other toys, so I can ask Malton the merchant to send me some more.
But because it is a rare item, I should scrimp and save where I could.
This is why I’m reusing the spent cartridges.

Making ammunition like this is surprisingly laborious and requires sensitivity.

If I do not build the image clearly, it would not make good cartridges.
The amount of magic power needed is not much but I can't put too much or too little.
If I don't picture the combustion image perfectly it won't have satisfactory power.

Troublesome as it is, but if I don't make it now, I can't make it at night in the orphanage later.

I certainly can't make cartridges around small kids.
If the worst case happens, it would be too late.

After finished making the last round, I ended by tidying up.

I soaked a towel in water, wrung it out, then wiped my sweat with it.
As I wiped my sweat clean from start to finish, I went on my way back, holding down my hungry stomach, while bathed in the light of the setting sun.

"Should I soon try using it in actual combat instead of just targets? I wanted to confirm how much power and effectiveness it has."

In order to do that it is necessary to ask Elle-sensei for permission to go inside the forest.
Because there are monsters in the forest.
They are suitable opponents for experiments.

However, I'm spinning my head over how to get sensei's permission.
Because of the misfire incident, Elle-sensei didn't really think kindly of my magic device development.

But combat practice dropped in in an unexpected form.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

A few days later—in the afternoon, close to nighttime.

As usual after revolver practice by the river, I finished making cartridges.

After making sure that there are no cartridges left inside the cylinder as a safety measure, I returned the gun to the gun belt.

I inserted the filled up wooden box into the metal ammo case snugly, and reached for the lid.

“Lute-kun!”

I look back to greet snow who came smilingly while waving her hands and going the river up.
I Think she came to inform me that dinner is done.

During that time the children of the town were playing in the riverbed behind Snow.

I also waved back.
I will finish tidying up before she arrives.

“Kyaaa!”

My hands that were tidying up were stopped by multiple screams.

I looked confused back to the children playing 100m upstream, screamed turned my back to the forest and started running.

Goblins are pouring out like an avalanche from the entrance of the forest.
15 of them.

They looked like hairless chimpanzees with big heads, wearing rags, and had faces 10 times more evil.
They are holding bows and arrows, axes, swords,spears, knives, shields

in their hands.
Though they are 3 heads tall they are unexpectedly fast.

3 of them have already set foot in the river.

Monsters favorite food are childrens soft flesh. I think the excitement makes the speed of the goblins faster.
At this rate several children will be caught by them and will be victims before arriving at the orphanage.

"…..!"

I immediately support myself with the body strengthening technique.

I throw the lid of the wooden box up and load the cylinder with six shots.
I pour the rest in my pockets.

Preparations are finished and i strengthen my legs and start running.

A 3 or 4 year old girl falls down while escaping and hit her head.
The whole strength left her body in an instant.
Damn it, it seems she fainted.

Snow ran to the child and hid her behind her back.
It is possible for Snow to carry the fainted girl with the body strengthening technique and escape.
But, the goblins will catch up before the kids are starting to run.

She shielded the child with her hands, not budging an inch against the flood of goblins.

"Dance in my hands, sword of ice! Ice Sword!"

Together with her incantation two 1m long ice swords are born in each hand and fired.

Aiming true, the sword pierced two goblins in front of her. But just when she thrusted her sword, one goblin fired an arrow so as to not get hit by the Ice Sword.

A small chance after the incantation.

The arrow flies straight to her chest.

It will hit the child behind her if she evades.
There is still no technique to expand the resistance technique by reflex.

Through my strengthened vision i saw Snows despaired face.

For a moment it overlapped with the expression of my friend in my previous existence.
I shake that dark feeling off in order to shout.

“Snoooooow!”

Sink or swim, I held the revolver.
Shooting position.

Distance 15m.

I aim at the flying arrow.

I strengthen my kinetic vision, I practiced until now, the distance is shorter than usual— i will do it, i persuaded myself with it.

I predict the future position of the arrow and held my breath to restrain the shaking.
I raised the hammer, put my finger on the trigger, and quietly pressed.

BANG!

A firing sound what is unfamiliar in this different world.

I made no mistake in the bullets aim and break the arrow.

“Yosshaa!”

The acrobatic shooting that i’m not able to do again was successful and i raised involuntary a shout.
It goes without saying that was good luck.

The goblins legs stop at the appearance of my firing sound and are staying vigilant.
In the meantime, i strengthen my legs again to catch up to Snow and hide her behind my back.

“Lu, Lute-kun, t, tha—”
“Never mind the thanks, Snow you hold her close and absolutely don’t move from here!”
“O, okay!”

A wild animal will instinctively pursue the prey which turns on’s back and tries to escape.
I want to avoid exciting the goblins a second time and assaulted by the goblins again.

I stop the conversation and point the muzzle at the goblins which legs had stopped.

I aim at the nearest goblin and fired.

Although it is a demon it is a living thing — But ,in order to protect Snow and the other girl I don’t waver and pull the trigger.

The bullet pierces the head of the goblin.
The blood sprays not showy like in a movie or drama.
It only falls down like the threads of a doll were cut.

I cannot defeat the goblins with one shoot when i don’t fire at the head with the power of the present revolver.

I slaughtered four goblins with the remaining bullets.

8 remained.

Regarding the goblins, it means that in an instant 5 of their comrades were killed.
Frenzied, they kicked up a splash and attacked once again.

“Ooooooooooooooooo!”

A roar with killing intent strikes my skin.

I frantically stopped my shaking body and moved my hands in a daze.
I ejected the empty cartridges from the cylinder using the ejector rod and quickly loaded the next set of bullets.
In order of priority, I aimed at the nearer goblins and the goblins with bows and arrows capable of long range attack.

First, I fired at the nearest goblin, who was holding a worn-out sword and a wooden shield.

The goblin promptly hid behind its shield, but it was no use.

Against a force that could pierce through car doors, a wooden shield is no obstacle.

The bullet easily pierced the shield, and shot the goblin in the head.

Their comrade defeated, the goblins instantly stopped moving.
Capturing that scene, I pointed the muzzle at the next target.

"…..su-"

I took a small breath.

Next is the one aiming our way with a bow and arrow.

Thanks to my strengthened kinetic vision, the goblin's movement looked like it was in slow motion.
But my own heart was beating quickly like mayflies buzzing in my ear.

Exhaling my breath and calming myself down, I fired the gun as practiced.

Before the goblin could shoot an arrow, I shot it between the eyebrows, it fell face-first into the water.

Like a precision machine, I proceeded to empty all my rounds on the goblins' heads.

I shot all 6 rounds.
2 goblins remaining.

Becoming aware of their own numerical inferiority, the two turned their backs and scurried back into the forest.

I reloaded the cylinder with cartridges, just in case.

Only 2 rounds remain in my left pocket.

If there had been more than 8 goblins coming……

Examining the situation for a while, there are no signs of them returning with reinforcements.

I released my body strengthening arts, and heaved a deep sigh.

Though it should have been only 3 minutes since the battle started, my forehead was already covered in beads of sweat.
I felt tired, and not only because I used up more than half my magic power.
There was also mental fatigue from experiencing my first battle.

I lowered the hammer, and turned around to check up on the state of Snow, who I had been covering for.

“Snow, are you injured? Does it hurt anywhere!”
“Lute-kun I’m scared! Lute-kun……!”

Snow clung to me while calling my name.

Because our heights are not that different, her head was buried on the back of my neck, it felt ticklish.

Despite being named Snow, her body was entirely soaked in warmth.

Seeing her safe, I felt more relieved than I’d imagine.

I lovingly caressed Snow’s head over and over again.

“Snow is admirable. Even when you’re scared, you stayed behind so everyone can get away…… you’re really great.”

In a life-threatening situation, she was able to do what I couldn’t do, and at 7 years old, at that.

I praised Snow from the bottom of my heart.
But while buried in my chest she shook her head, and holding back her tears she clearly said to me.

“Lute-kun too, thank you, you protected Snow and the kids.
Thanks……”

Snow’s words of gratitude.

“……”

No matter how much I help her out, it doesn’t change what I did in my previous life, that sin will not disappear.
But hearing those words…… I felt the weight in the bottom of my heart lighten just a little bit.

“Me too…… thank you Snow.”

I embraced Snow tightly.
She’s warm.
She’s alive.
Having those feelings, she grasped my fingers. Her tears fell down my cheeks.

Afterwards, the kids that fled earlier sought Elle-sensei’s help, and she rushed over.

Until then, Snow and I kept on hugging, as if confirming each other’s warmth.

Chapter 9

Lute, age 7.

After repelling the goblins, Elle-sensei checked us for injuries.
There was only a cut on the little girl when she fainted, so with Elle-sensei's healing magic she recovered in the blink of an eye.

After that sensei led us back to the orphanage.

A party of guards were called from town to serve as lookouts.
During that time, Elle-sensei went inside the forest alone and killed the 2 goblins that ran away.
Moving easily around the forest, she looked for other monsters that might be a threat, then went back.
It seems she didn't find anything besides the goblins.

That night, a meeting was convened at the mayor's house.

The agenda was this evening's "Goblin Attack Incident".

There are cases where monsters individually attacked towns, but it's the first time they did so en masse.

To start with, ferocious monsters like goblins had never been found in these forests.
It's the first case ever since the town was founded.

A villager jokingly said "Isn't this the revival of a demon king?".
The mayor admonished him for indiscretion, and he went quiet.

On the bright side, through my and Snow's efforts there are no casualties, though some did get injured.
It was a rather fortunate outcome.

But we can't expect good luck to happen every time.
At the meeting it was decided that once every 30 days, the guard party and Elle-sensei would come together and look around the forest, patrolling to make sure there are no dangerous monsters.

Tonight, the guard party will take shifts standing watch on the outskirts of town just in case.

Everyone's words of thanks to me and Snow kept on coming until the next day.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

After the goblin attack incident, people's opinion of me underwent a complete change.

Originally among the townspeople I had gained a bad reputation—I was the creepy kid who, even though I became the orphanage's #1 contributor through my earnings from reversi and other toys, spent the money doing suspicious research with magic liquid metal.

As for myself, because I had immersed myself in handgun making, I never noticed that I had a bad reputation.

Through this incident, the public opinion of me became that of a "Genius who had no talent as a magician, but compensated for it with magic devices".

Really, a complete change…….

The mayor's complete change was particularly severe.

The girl that Snow and I saved was the mayor's daughter, and she was taken at first sight by me.
Via the mayor, she pressed to have me as her husband.
The mayor also eagerly suggested that I marry her and stay and protect this town.

Of course, I declined.
I like this town, but protecting this town for the rest of my life is something I could not do.

Also, I was happy to be praised, but in terms of actual combat experience, there are a lot of points where I was lacking.

I could control my magic power as I wanted during practice, and yet control became sloppy in actual combat.
Because of that I spent magic power uselessly.

Also, I realized that the revolver's reload speed, number of rounds, and power are insufficient.

It turned out okay since the number of opponents was small, but if next time there is more of them, I don't think I'll be able to fully protect Snow and the others.
I still get cold sweat now when I think back on it.

Before the incident, the "S&W M10" was to be the prototype for a "S&W M19 Combat Magnum" chambered for the more potent .357 Magnum round.that could fire magnum bullets.
I woke up to the fact that now it's no longer a matter of pursuing a hobby.

I postponed the M19 temporarily, and decided to start working on an assault rifle.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

After finishing lunch, I returned to the boys' room.

It was in order to prepare the things I need for making an assault rifle at the test firing range.

Since the goblin attack incident, by the mayor's decree, kids are not to go to the river without adults.
But only I was allowed, for the sake of magic device experimenting.

Having a somewhat overprotective tendency, Elle-sensei made a sour face, but in the end, it was me who defeated the goblins so she gave her tacit consent.

Surely there is no way I was going to be making an assault rifle in the orphanage, even if Elle-sensei thinks it's inexcusable, everyday after finishing my chores I went to the test firing range.

Today too, I took out the cask containing magic liquid metal from the corner of the room.

The revolver for self-defense has also been loaded with ammo, and is hanging from my gun belt.
Just in case, I took a wooden box packed full of .38 Special9×29.5mmR bullets from the metal ammo case in one hand.

I put the wooden box on top of the cask, and went to the firing range through the orphanage backyard

On the way, as I was passing through the backyard, the students had already gathered for magician's basic class.

One of them, Snow, found me and came over, wagging her tail.

"Lute-kun!"

She clung to me without hesitation.
She made me drop the cask and wooden box in my hands.

"Snow! That was dangerous, didn't I tell you not to cling to me so suddenly?"
"Okay, got it. I'll be careful next time"
"That's what you said yesterday…… hey, stop sniffing me. It tickles."
"But Lute-kun's smell is so good it made me feel calm."

Not listening to my demands for self-control, Snow buried her face in my neck and sniffed.
Her dog ears, silky-smooth cheeks, and her breath felt really ticklish.

Snow is an abandoned child of the minority tribe called the White Wolf Tribe who lives in the North Continent.
As might be expected from a dog species, she seems to like sniffing smells.
Recently she had been clinging to me and sniffing like this.

I heaved a sigh of resignation, picked up the cask and wooden box, and patted Snow's head rather roughly.

Far from showing signs of dislike, she seemed to feel good and smiled "Ehehehe".

Snow's attitude also changed drastically since the goblin attack incident.

Previously she was at the distance of a best childhood friend, sometimes to the level of "Huh, did she just fall for me?".

But ever since the incident, she's been actively showing favor like this.
Always eating together with me, following me around, never leaving my side whenever there's time.
Of course, she gave up when I asked if she wants to follow me to the toilet.

The frequency of body contact also increased to an absurd degree.

She clings to me like just now, of course, but she also held my hands, linked arms, and when I was doing revolver maintenance in the boys' room, she clung to my head from behind.
At those times she was sniffing me, of course.

Snow likes my scent too much—I only heard this from the girls in the girls' room, but she got her hands on one of my worn out shirts that can't be used anymore, and seems to have been smelling it to sleep ever since.

She complained that I was being noisy with the “ticklish” thing and wanted to do it no matter what.

When I persuaded her to stop sniffing my stuff at night, her face looked as if the world was going to end, her ears flopped closed, and her tail hung dejectedly.
Not wanting to see her like that, I compromised and said “sniff quietly so you don’t bother anyone”.
I’m being too sweet to Snow.

This is my own convenient guess, but Snow was originally unaware that she was holding favor towards me.
Then starting with the incident, she became aware of it.

Having this cute, good-natured childhood friend fall for me.
I was glad to have been reincarnated into this world.

If there are any problems, it’s that……

“Lute-kun where are you going ?”
“To the test firing range, I want to experiment to see if I can make a new gun”
“Can I come along?”
“You obviously can’t, right. Snow has to go to magician’s basic classes now.”
“Uuuu, that’s right, but……”

If Snow stays with me, then she is simply getting her priorities backwards.
Just a little bit more and she’ll turn into an idiot kid.

“I’ll be at the test firing range until evening, so come over once you’re done with classes.”
“……. Okay. Once I’m there, can I shoot Lute-kun’s revolver?”
“Of course. So do your lessons properly, ‘kay?”

Snow took an interest in the revolver after the incident.

In order to dispel her fear of guns, I proactively taught her how to shoot. It was in order to protect herself at the time it would matter the most, like when she runs out of magic power.
I was planning on making a gun for Snow's own personal defense in the near future.

Elle-sensei showed up in the backyard.

"Well then everyone, now we shall begin magician's basic class"
"Look, Snow. Elle-sensei's starting class."
"A little more, I want to tickle you a little more."
"You can't be like that, everyone's waiting. See, go along."
"Uuuuu……. Lute-kun is mean."

She reluctantly let go of me while uttering complaints.

"Well, see you again then. Don't make trouble for Elle-sensei and the others."
"Okay, see you later."
"…… Snow-kun, your words and actions don't match. Let go of me."

Snow pinched the edge of my shirt in futile resistance.
Her face went timid when I pointed it out, but in the end she let go of her hands with a smile and ran back towards Elle-sensei.

I picked up the cask and went towards the test firing range.

I arrived at the test firing range.

I held my stuff, except for the cask, under my arms to keep them out of the way.

I opened the cask's lid, and put my hands in. I felt the cold touch of metal on my skin.
Relishing the cold feel, I once again thought of the gun I was going to make.

The gun I was going to make now was an "AK-47" assault rifle, a masterpiece created in the Soviet Union.
Though there are lots of improved variations like AKM, for now let's just call it an AK-47 for convenience.

Why did I choose the AK-47 out of the many assault rifles? It's because it had the simplest structure.

Moreover, it was, generally speaking, sturdy, being able to pound away perfectly in the freezing cold of the Arctic circle, the deserts of Africa, or the jungles of Southeast Asia, and even without going through maintenance after being soaked in muddy water.

Some even think that rusted and dirty AK-47s that had been buried in a wet rice field and dug out again after half a year can be fired without a problem. Such dirt and rust resistance, terrible firepower that can shoot 600 rounds per minute, a structure that made it hard to get jammed, and able to fire even when it hasn't been maintained in decades, it was that kind of tough assault rifle.

Because of these advantages, in the world of my previous life, it was often copied and would pop up in all corners of the earth.
Appearing in national flags and banknotes of several countries, it was a weapon that redrew the geopolitical map of the world after the cold war, falling in to the hands of guerilla and anti-government forces around the world.

It is said that several hundreds of thousands of people each year lost their lives because of this weapon.
Because of that it was also called the "little WMD".

That is the reason why I can say that this is the most appropriate assault rifle for this underdeveloped alternate world.

But there are two problems.

Number one: although the structure is simple, it's still an automatic.

It uses what is called a gas-operated system, where the next round is loaded using the gas that is produced when the first round is fired.

In the case of the AK-47, it is done by using a gas piston located on top of the barrel.
This is called a gas-operated system.
Whether I can make something that works by this system or not…..

I learned this the hard way while making the revolver, but although I have the know-how, the difference between theory and practice is like heaven and earth.

Problem number two: the cartridges.

Rifle cartridges are very different in appearance and contents to handgun cartridges.

First, the outer shape of the cartridges is long and narrow, with a neck like a wine bottle along the way.

The powder inside the rifle bullets burn slower than that of handguns (although only by some 1000ths of a second).
Because the combustion speed is slower, the pressure in the airtight compartment inside the case and barrel increases, so it can fire bullets at a higher velocity and energy.

To reproduce such a powder, it is necessary to do extraordinary experiments.

“Well, I know the final form though. Since there is no need to do trial and error to get the answer, it’s still easy.”

The design of the bullet is way more complicated than the gun body itself.
It even raised heated discussions between ballistics experts.
Small changes in the bullets’ weight, shape of the tip, and powder quantity will make them into entirely different weapons.
“…… If I could make it, it seems it’s going to be a reliable weapon.”

I exhaled lightly once again, and closed my eyes.
I used the power of imagination I cultivated while making the revolver to the utmost.

“The first part I should make is ……”

I gently put my hands into the cold liquid metal.

Chapter 10

Lute, age 8.

An afternoon I spent rather relaxedly, after the summer’s climax has passed.
I was carrying my luggage while going to visit the test firing range.

I dropped the luggage at the riverside.

The cask of magic liquid metal, the metal ammo case.
The assault rifle, AK-47.

2 kinds of wooden boxes are contained in the metal case.
One contains .38 Special for the revolver that I hang on my waist.
The .38 special (9×29.5mmR) box is bigger than the exclusive AK47 7.62mm russian short-circuit(experimental bullets)

Thanks to spending most time on the AK 47, it is mostly completed and i’m on the final stage.

The appearance is black while the stock(the part applied to the shoulder at the very back of the gun) is no longer the downward-angled solid wooden stock typical for this weapon, but a skeletal metal in-line stock.

It is necessary to match the gun barrel with the height of the eyes to aim accurately while shooting with the AK 47. But if the stock is not in-line with the barrel (or even if it’s straight, it is at an extreme angle) it is hard

to point the muzzle straight, so the muzzle jumps up from the recoil. During sustained full-auto fire, the cumilative effects of recoil can quickly force the muzzle off-target, something that is exacerbated with a non in-line stock. In just a few shots in full-auto, the weapon becomes an anti-aircraft gun.

So to minimize the jumps because of recoil, with the AKM as a reference I lowered the barrel from eye-height to shoulder-height, used an in-line stock, and added further minor adjustments (basically, I arranged the barrel and stock in a straight line).

Also, I reproduced the internal structure precisely, and implemented the automatic system.

After firing, one part of the discharged gas enters through the gas port (an opening for gas to enter, as the bullet is fired and advances near the muzzle the inside of the barrel between the bullet and the cartridge becomes an airtight compartment, and because of the high pressure a part of the gas therein enters through the gas port) and pushes a gas piston inside the gas cylinder backwards, pushes back the turn bolt (the part that touches the bullet) and bolt carrier (the part that supports the bolt), and raises the hammer.
The bolt carrier that was pushed back is restored by the recoil spring, and the next round is pushed from the banana magazine to the chamber (because the bolt is pushed no less than 1 cartridge length backwards, enough space is created and the next round is pushed up into it).

At the end of all the hard work, when the gas operated system ran smoothly, I yelled out in excitement.
The other thing that I want to compliment myself on is the included switch that goes between “safety”, “full automatic”, and “semi automatic” modes.

When the safety selector is set to on, the selector lever blocks the trigger so it couldn’t be moved.

In semi-automatic mode, the selector lever doesn’t do anything.
When the trigger is pulled, the hammer is released, but its movement is

hindered by getting stuck on a certain disconnector hook (a part directly connected to the trigger). In that situation, the hook won't come loose unless the trigger is temporarily released to its original position.

Lastly, in full-automatic mode, the selector lever holds down the disconnector.
With the hook being held down, the hammer will not get caught.
Because of that, the hammer will continue to move in a reciprocating motion until the trigger is released.

Furthermore, I also added a rate reducer for when using the full-automatic mode.
Thanks to this rate reducer, there is a gap between shots when rapid firing, increasing the effectiveness by making it easier to aim even when the gunner is less experienced.

It had the appearance of a metal object, but it was made from just magic liquid metal, like the revolver, so it's lighter than one would imagine.

Though my mental age is no less than 30, my body is that of an 8 year old.
When holding the AK-47 (prototype) I look like some middle-eastern child soldier.

If I were to think of making an assault rifle other than an AK-47, it would have been an impossible task.
In the world of my previous life it could be made even in countries with low technology, that is precisely why it could be made in this alternate world.

But it's still not complete.
The problem is of course the ammunition.
Though I started making it by trial and error simultaneously while making the actual gun, it is still far from satisfactory.

For now, because of the gas operated system the empty cartridges are ejected.
That too is because it's an AK-47.

The piston operates without causing misfires or jams (because the combination of parts had room to spare) even when shooting cheap non-brand-name cartridges or cartridges whose powder had deteriorated from moisture.

But there's no way I can be satisfied with that.
In order to perfectly display its power, I spent time looking for the optimal distribution.

The thickness of the cartridge, the burning impression in the amount of powder, the properties of the bullet core, et cetera—all of these are still incomplete.

Because I had completed the actual gun recently, I had mostly been conducting development on the cartridges.

I took out a wooden box with a label on the lid from the metal case.
Each box was filled with experimental bullets improved using the results of the test firings.
I took out 1 box, and filled the banana magazine with it.

I slid the fire selector off "Safe" and into "Semi-Auto"
I rocked in the magazine, and pulled the charging handle, loading the first round into the chamber.
I increased my physical abilities with body strengthening arts.
I pointed the muzzle towards the humanoid targets on the cliffside.

BANG!

It fired.

"Ku—!"

An empty cartridge danced in the air.
Though I only shot 1 round, my shoulder endured a strong thrusting recoil.

Its power, recoil, and gunpowder combustion noise…. could not be compared to the "S&W M10" revolver.

While checking the remaining sensation in my hands, I switched to full-automatic mode.
Restoring my motivation, I rapid-fired.

BANG! BABABABABABABABABANG!

The noise was loud, but I also had trouble keeping the muzzle on-target.
I unintentionally increased the magic power for body strengthening arts.

I shot all bullets and my whole body feels numb.

Mmm after all this is no good. The combustion speed is still too fast.

The result of that is somehow—a bullet hole was unraveled at the target 30 meters away.

Among assault rifles, the AK-47 is not particularly accurate (even so, for a 100m distance it is concentrated in a circle 20cm in diameter.)
But even considering that, this is not a very good result.

I jotted down my detailed thoughts on the experimental bullets, and put them in the wooden box.
Of course, I also collected the fallen cartridges and put them back in their wooden box.

Next, I took the next box, and stuffed the cartridges into the magazine.

Exhausting all the boxes (except the spares) like this, I left behind my detailed impressions.

Once I finished shooting all the experimental bullets I prepared, I next started revolver practice.

I won't make experimental bullets for the AK-47 here now.
I'm going to be making them tomorrow.
I'll be making them while comparing with my notes in one hand.

The reason why I don't make them right away—If I don't take my time and concentrate, I can't create the improved experimental bullets the way I noted down in my memo. That will take up an entire afternoon.

If I can finish the AK-47 soon, I wouldn't be using the revolver so often anymore.
But since I don't know when that will happen, I kept on practicing.
It is better to have lots of things I can do in order to live in this world.

I smoothly put 6 cartridges inside the cylinder, and shot standing.
Next I practiced quick drawing with the gun holstered in my gun belt.

I used up all but two handgun bullet boxes like this.

I gathered up the fallen cartridges for making new bullets.

This is my daily life as an 8 year old.
Morning, helping Elle-sensei with lessons.
Afternoon, test firing experimental AK-47 bullets or making them. Then revolver practice—something like that.

Around the time I finished making .38 Special ammo, Snow came up to the test firing range.

"Lute-kun, sorry to make you wait!"
"Didn't I tell you already, it's dangerous if you suddenly cling to me like that. Also stop sniffing me. I reek of sweat, right?"
"Not at all! You smell really nice! *sniff sniff*"
"Stop sniffing already, it tickles"
"Ehehehe, sorry"

Before I knew it, it had become our usual conversation.
I breathed a sigh of resignation, and patted Snow's head.
She closed her eyes in happiness, and wagged her white tail.

Snow is now 8 years old.

In order to save up money to enter a magic school soon, she had started doing part time work since the middle of last year.
For example, making magic stones.

Magic stones are stones that can store magic power.

Infusing magic power into it while picturing fire regularly for about 30 days makes a magic stone with fire attribute.

Picturing water makes one with water attribute.
Picturing lightning makes one with lightning attribute.
Picturing wind makes one with wind attribute—that way you can make magic stones with various uses.

If a fire magic stone runs out of magic power, it can be recharged by once again picturing fire while infusing it with magic power regularly for 30 days.
You can think of it as a magic power battery.

Attribute magic stones, and recharged magic stones (lower price than attribute magic stones) can be sold to merchants specializing in magic devices at a high price.
Part of that money goes to the orphanage, the rest goes into her savings.
The year after next, the savings are meant to be used for enrollment fees for the magic school she wants to enter.

In the afternoons was, as usual, magician's practice.
After practice, Snow comes over to the test firing range and practiced shooting the revolver with me.

The remaining 2 boxes of ammo was for Snow.

This is Snow's daily life nowadays.
Morning, part time work infusing magic in magic stones.
Afternoon, magician's practice, revolver practice—something like that.

Snow was already at the same level as me when it comes to revolver reloading, quick draw, and firing precision.

She also has talent as a magician.
According to Elle-sensei, who teaches magician's basic classes, Snow has very good memory.
She unmistakably has aptitude to be a B+ rank magician to begin with.

Rather than jealousy, the feelings of wanting to congratulate her were overwhelmingly stronger when I heard that.

Because Snow is my closest childhood friend, I felt happy for her being praised as if it was intended for myself.

Also, her physical growth recently is amazing.

When she clung to me I felt C-cup breasts through her shirt.
She is also still in the middle of growing, this time next year I am sure she will have gone over D cup.

To the point where I am worried about where my eyes are pointing.

Perhaps because she was one of the white wolf tribe of the northern continent, she was weak in summer.
Because of that her clothes were rough.
Pure white skin yet healthy buttocks, smooth sides without even 1 strand of hair growing from it, a small navel slightly moistened with sweat, and springy breasts peek out from underneath her shirt!
I stole glances at her without her noticing many times over!

I realized that my body became hot from Snow clinging on to me.

The desire to not only pat her head, but also to touch every corner of her tender body became stronger in me.

But she was still 8 years old.
My own body is the same age as her, but there is a 35 year old adult inside.
I don't intend to lose to my desires and hurt my precious childhood friend.

Yes lolita! No ecchi! I am a gentleman so I absolutely won't do anything that would hurt Snow! …… I surely won't! I probably won't.

Strengthening my reason, I called out to her to get some distance.

“W, well then, let’s start practice. Hey, Snow let go.”
“I want to hug harder, just a little more.”
“Afuu~!”

She put more strength into her arms.

The feeling of Snow’s breasts became stronger.
Her hips, inversely, drew back.
I cursed this young 8 year old body.

I started becoming horny.

I want to push her down right now and do this and that—but I came to my senses and resisted the feelings that were about to explode.

We’re still 8 years old, it’s still too early no matter what anyone thinks, the stimulus was too strong.

I pulled myself apart from Snow while feeling regret for separating from the feeling of those breasts from the bottom of my heart.

“Th, that should be enough, no? If we cling like this any further we’ll have no time for practice”
“Lute-kun is stingy.”
“Yeah yeah, stingy is fine. Here, the gunbelt. Put the cylinder in yourself.”

I handed the gunbelt and revolver over to Snow.

She fastened the belt and held the revolver with experienced hands.

She pushed the cylinder out, and took 6 9×29.5mmR rounds from a wooden box.

Raising her body abilities with body strengthening, she fired at the human shapes on the cliffs.

We began practice.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

When it became evening I finished cleaning up

While Snow goes besides the river bank she asks.

Lute-kun what will you do when you become 10.

In this world there is no concept of birthday; if one becomes 15 they will generally be treated as an adult.

10-year's old is an important time to decide one's career.
Children of the upper classes are different, but the common folk children become merchants' apprentices, craftsmen's students, etc. or enroll in school if the house has the leisure to do so.

Inside the orphanage including Snow and me there are 4 persons at the same age
Snow is going to enter a magic school.
The two girls who are Snow's friends wish to be maid apprentices and took up a recruitment letter from the town's bulletin board.
They sent a letter and are waiting for a answer.

In this situation only I'm unable to chose a career.

Probably, she is worried as a childhood friend.

"As I thought, you're going to Malton-san's place and run a toy store?"
"No, that's not it."

In reality, the discussion comes repeatedly whether or not to learn how to become a merchant from Malton, but I refuse it entirely.

If I don't have a goal, I think using the knowledge of my previous life and selling toys wouldn't be bad.
But I had already decided on a lifestyle.

I didn't intend to keep it a secret, but I haven't told this to Snow or Elle-sensei.

This is a good chance so I'll tell her.
I wanted Snow to know.

"I was thinking of going on a journey when I turn 10. Then… If I can, I want to help people in trouble or in need of help."
"Why do you want to do that?"

Atonement for the acquaintance that was cornered to suicide in my previous life… of course I can't say that.
It hurts to lie, but this is what I said.

"Last year I helped Snow right? That time, I felt that helping others is something worth doing."
"If that's so, then Snow will go on a journey with Lute-kun!"

I thought Snow would say something like that.
I gave her the lines that I've prepared for this.

"Snow will go to school when you turn 10, right? Then you will become a splendid magician and go to the north continent to look for your parents, that was your dream, right?"
"If I'm with Lute-kun, I can go to the north continent the way I am now."

Certainly, if Snow holds an AK-47, her fighting power would be doubled.
It wouldn't be difficult to face ordinary monsters and enemies.

But Snow has talent to become a magician.
Furthermore, Elle-sensei acknowledged that she'll "certainly become B+ rank".
If by any chance before that….

I don't intend to crush that talent of hers.

I let out my honest feelings to Snow.

“I would be happy to be together with Snow. But, Snow has talent to become a magician. I don’t want to be with Snow so much as to eat away Snow’s talent. I don’t want to become a burden for Snow.”
“Lute-kun……”

Snow wiped her rising tears with her finger.

She stopped her legs and released her hands, then turned around to face me.

Miraculously, that place is exactly where I saved her from goblins.

Snow’s skin became red down to her neck, and not just because of the setting sun’s light.
Her eyes are not filled with sadness, but with hot emotions.
Snow clasped her hands together on her chest, mustering courage, she spoke out.

“There is something…… I’ve always wanted to tell Lute-kun.”

At the riverside where the sun sets.

A trembling, red-faced childhood friend, staring straight ahead.

I’m not a thick-headed protagonist of some manga or light novel, I’m already aware of Snow’s feelings.
The reason I didn’t say anything is because she’s still an 8 year old child.
But now, it seems like that Snow is going to let out her feelings.

8 years after I was born.
If you add the memories of my previous life, 35 years.

This is the first time a girl confessed to me.

Of course, the answer had already been decided. It’s ‘Yes!’.

With the setting sun at her back, Snow mustered her courage with all her might.
Putting in her whole feelings, she exclaimed loudly.

“Snow…… Please make Snow into Lute-kun’s ‘sex slave!’.”
“——Huuuwwwwhhhaaaattttt!!!?”

Receiving the most unexpected of unexpected proposals, I unintentionally let out a yell that didn’t lose to Snow’s.

Snow’s idiot kid levels had sped up faster than I’d imagined.

Chapter 11

I—— Snow, am an abandoned child of the rare White Wolf Race who live in the North Continent.

Around the time I was 1 year old, I was left before the orphanage that Elle-sensei manages.

The name “Snow” was sewn into the clothes I was wearing.
Probably the parents who threw me away sewed it.

And a child of the human race of the same age was thrown away too.

His name is Lute.

At First, in regards to Lute-kun, I didn’t like him much.

Lute was a strange child, around the time we were 3 years old, while we played with the onee-sans in the childs room, he took Elle-sensei’s classes at his own convenience.

He sat in the back of the classroom and received the lessons more quietly than any of the other students.

Furthermore he had an interest in magic and also came to participate in the basic magic classes.
However Lute-kun does not have talent as a magician.

Elle-sensei already told that to Lute-kun.
At the time, he was supposed to have said “I will look for a way other than magic”, but he still took part in magic lessons.

According to Elle-sensei, there seems to be kids who still spend great effort even though they understand that they had no talent as magicians.
Such obstinacy was especially common for boys.
Among them there are kids that couldn’t accept reality, got their hands on dangerous magic tools and lost their lives, said Elle-sensei.

I understand Lute-kun’s feelings, but it’s dangerous to use magic as a human with a low amount of magic.

Magic power is the spirit that’s left over after being used to maintain one’s body and mind.

In the worst case scenario you would die if you use up more magic power than that surplus.

But the other party is still 3 years old.
An age where he won’t understand even when persuaded.
Therefore Elle-sensei did not drive him out and consented to his participation in the class.

However a problem occurred immediately.
Lute-kun learned how to use magic by watching the others do it and imitating them.

Lute-kun who had no talent in magic immediately ran out of magic and fainted.
Elle-sensei, whose face changed to panic, rushed over.
Once Lute-kun, who was put to sleep in the child’s room, woke up, I told him the situation and to be careful.

“That is a no-no! Lute-kun is making trouble for Sensei!”
“Sorry, sorry. I’ll be careful next time.”

Lute-kun was not sorry at all and took part in the lesson again.

And at the next lesson.

Lute-kun faints again after using magic.
This time he was bleeding from the head, choked on vomit and fainted.
He would have died if sensei didn’t notice and ran over.

The gentle Elle-sensei flew into a rage because of this accident.
She forbade Lute-kun from participating in basic magic classes.

After forbidding participation in the lessons, Elle-sensei came with hanging rabbit ears to me and asked how Lute-kun’s doing.

Did Lute-kun do anything strange because he was forbidden from taking part in classes? She asked.

It seems that every once in a while there are kids that, when pressed down by their elders, become gloomy, lose their ambition, and became apathetic.

Sensei is worried that he would become like that because of this incident.

When I answered “he’s not different from usual”, she breathed a sigh of relief.

At this time, even as a child I immediately understood that Elle-sensei was troubled because of Lute-kun.
It looks like until now Sensei had been looking after many troublesome children.

Every once in a while, there would be some kids that don’t have any common sense, but Lute-kun stood out even among them.
At that time, Sensei grumbled to me, “If I were to speak badly of him I’d

call him ‘abnormal'”, she said as if letting the words slip from her mouth.

So at that time I disliked Lute-kun.

Lute-kun who troubled Elle-sensei, who gathered and raised us without asking anything in return, like a mother.
Lute-kun who caused trouble for everyone, but pushes forward like a child.

The baby that was left behind on the same day as him—and just because of that became the one in charge of looking after Lute-kun, the one at Lute-kun’s side, was me.

Although I go and complain occasionally.
But I thought this everyday life would continue forever.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Lute-kun and I, age 4.

In the orphanage, once you turn 4 your job is look after the 2-3 year olds in the children’s room.

And yet Lute-kun did nothing at all, and only slept in a corner of the room.

I was incited to pay attention to Lute-kun by the two 4-year olds who were looking after the kids with me.
I had to pay attention because I was the closest childhood friend to Lute-kun, they said.

I resented that, even though I was still the one in charge of looking after Lute-kun.

On top of that, I unconsciously wished that something bad would happen to Lute-kun, who was always causing trouble for Elle-sensei and everyone at the orphanage.

"Lute-kun, you'll get scolded if you don't properly take care of the little kids with us!"
"I want to help you all very much but the way you did it is so good that I didn't get a turn. That's why I was sitting in a corner so that I won't get in the way."
"If that's the case, then you can help playing house. We have roles enough for the four of us."
"Playing house?"
"If Lute-kun does not play, I will tell sensei that you skipped work."
"I didn't really mean to skip work but…. all right! Let's play together."

He obediently did as ordered once I said sensei's name.
I softly murmured, "so you'll listen if I mention Elle-sensei, hmph".

"So which role should I take? The father, or maybe the husband?"
"Lute-kun will be the pet pink slime!"
"Is that really necessary…?"

With a surprised face Lute-kun asked back.
I insisted that a pet was necessary and that day I had him play the role as pet until we were finished playing house.

If with this he would reflect a little and start looking after the younger ones…….

"If any of you manage to defeat me in a game, I will keep the role of pet."

Once again, Lute-kun behaves as if he doesn't intend to help, he pressed his demand to play a self-made game he called "reversi".

I thought he had been sneakily doing something these few days, to turn out to be making a game….
But the rules of this toy, the so called reversi, were very simple and it

seemed very interesting.
Therefore we got on board with Lute-kun's proposal.

Even if the toy was his own making, there were 3 of us.
I simply expected that at least one of us can win.

I was the first to challenge him.

In the opening Lute-kun's black piece were changed to white in a good mood successfully.
He deliberately put his black pieces so I can easily turn them all over.

I didn't notice that this was a trap, I felt overjoyed and joked around.

"Lute-kun is we~ak! Even though it's a game you made yourself."
"Hahaha. Snow, make it funnier if you are going to tell a joke. Snow still can't do addition and subtraction, how can I lose in this game of intellect?"

Looking down on me with sarcastic remarks.

But the surface of the board is almost white and there is no more than a few black pieces left.
I judged that he was a sore loser.

"Muuu… I have a feeling I'm being made fun of… Fine! If Lute-kun loses, he has to listen to another order besides being a golden marumaru!"
"As you wish… But if I win, I'll touch your fluffy dog ears and tail to my hearts content!"
"It's not dog ears! …It's wolf ears! Because Snow is from White Wolf tribe!"
"I know… and don't forget the promise."

Lute-kun answers lightly while placing a black piece at the edge.

huh?

The white carpet was cut diagonally by toppling the pieces over and the black ones formed a line.

I looked for a way to deal with the rapidly changing situation, but there was no way to change the color of the edge pieces!

This was Lute-kun's aim from the start!

As I belatedly realized his aim, he put on a smile like a hunter whose prey was caught in a trap.

I hate him, I hate him, I hate him!

Mortified, I looked for a trick to reverse the situation, but he had gained control of the edges, I was at my wits' end and lost.

"Uuuu… I lost…"
"Yeah, I won! Don't forget the promise, okay?"
"I know… I'll let you touch it when we're about to sleep at night…"
"O-ok."

Lute-kun's triumphant face is suddenly turned red and he turned away.

Since his face got red I got worried about his condition.

"What's the matter, Lute-kun? Your face is red. Did you catch a cold?"
"N-no it's nothing. So… who's the next opponent?"

He turned towards the other two, as if to say "I'm not interested in an opponent I already beat."

Muu… and I was worried about you.

He happily plays Reversi with the other girls without noticing me sulking.

(*I know that it's more fun to play with the other girls rather than playing with me who was always unkind. But you're being too obvious!*)

Without noticing me getting angry, Lute-kun continued playing reversi with the other two while talking excitedly.

(*As I thought, I hate Lute-kun. I HATE him!*).

In the end not even one of us was able to beat Lute-kun.
We borrowed reversi to practice, determined to "defeat Lute-kun!"

That evening, right before bed, Lute-kun came to rub my tail and ears.

Several days later, the "defeat Lute-kun!" plan was easily abandoned.

Because no matter how much we practice, none of us could even corner him.

We can hope for a close game, but there is just no way to get a solid hit, so it can't be helped.
For that reason, we settled with the conclusion that it would be more fun to play among ourselves, whose skills are more balanced.

It seems Lute-kun was fine with it.
When we finished taking care of the children we played reversi and Lute-kun continued to sit in a corner of the room with closed eyes.

Because Lute-kun took care of heavy labor such as clearing up the futons the other 2 stopped complaining.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Lute-kun and I, age 5.

Once you reach the age of 5 you start having lessons for reading and writing, arithmetics, history, and common knowledge.

We 5~6 year old children studied in the biggest room in the orphanage where desks had been lined up.

But only Lute-kun was special.

He has finished all his studies at the age of 3.
Therefore he became Elle-sensei's class assistant.

His work is mainly to prepare teaching materials, warn children who were noisy, and look after children who fall behind in their studies.

The child who is behind in her studies… …is me.

"The plate on the left has 5 loaves of bread, the plate on the right has 12 loaves. So all of them together, how many loaves are there?"
"Err, Uhm… …"

I bent my fingers and counted.

"Fi, fifteen?"
"Wrong. The answer is 17."
"Uu~"

I unintentionally fell flat on the desk.
Though I'm good at learning to read and write, history, and common knowledge, no matter what I do I was weak at arithmetics.

I stumbled at the first thing, addition.
Other kids my age had already learned subtraction.

Lute-kun was teaching me today as well.

He patiently accompanied me, who was always unkind to him, without even seeming annoyed.

He kindly, gently, cheered me up when I made a mistake in arithmetics.

"Don't worry! I'll be with Snow until you can do addition. But since it's Snow, you will be able to do it soon!"
"Really?"

“It’s a promise… so cheer up! So… I’ll bring out the next question… The plate on the left has 3 loaves of bread, the plate on the right has 5. So, all of them together how many loaves of bread are there?」”
“Uhh, uhh… 8!”
“Correct! Snow is a genius! Excellent, excellent!”
“Ehehehe.”

It was only a simple arithmetic problem but he was delighted and praised me as if it was his own accomplishment.

At first I thought he was a selfish child who troubled Elle-sensei——but nowadays I don’t dislike him.

I had come to notice that I was able to look at him without prejudice.

Lute-kun is surely clever.
His curiosity and his drive are higher than others.
Unskillful but intelligent, full of curiosity, and having energy to spare, he puts whatever interests him into practice.

Kids like us could not be so proactive, but he was.
Because of that he was misunderstood by the people around him.

Weird child, odd child, unchildlike—they say.

Perhaps there is no one in the world who could understand Lute-kun except me, the childhood friend.

I decided in my heart “I, at least, will be kind to him”.

Lute kun who is only interested in himself does not notice my sympathy, he innocently continued the arithmetic lessons.

Well then, I’ll bring out the next question.
Yeah! I’ll do my best so I can do addition properly!

He again pats my head delightedly.
The feeling of his hand was so pleasant it became a habit.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

At that time, “I hate Lute-kun who always troubles Elle-sensei” had turned into the prideful pity of “He’s my childhood comrade who was cast out by his parents like me, so I should take good care of him”.

Moreover, I embraced my childhood love of Lute-kun shortly afterwards.

The cause for that was the day Lute-kun and I were going together to gather firewood——

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

“Lute-kun you came at the right time. I was just going to call you.”

Sensei called us out from behind, stopping us.

“What can I do for you, Elle-sensei?”
“Actually, there is someone who came and wanted to see Lute-kun. Can you come to the reception office?”
“Umm… is it my parents who abandoned me? Or… a relative came to pick me up?”
「……ッ」
“……fu”

Elle-sensei fell silent, as if her face had been slapped all of a sudden.
I guessed from sensei’s attitude.
The one who Lute-kun wants to meet the most didn’t come to pick him up.

Sensei opens her mouth apologetically.

"Lute-kun, I didn't mean that the person who came are your parents or relatives. I'm sorry for putting in a strange way like that and making it a misunderstanding."
"It's ok. I was only curious when I heard it. I dont think i particularly wanted to meet my parents now."
"……"

I look down unintentionally.
That was because I couldn't look at Lute-kun's firm behavior.

Lute-kun and I were children who were left in front of the orphanage.
All orphans should want to see their parents. Elle-sensei often said so.
And yet, he did not cast off his confident attitude, conversely, Elle-sensei became worried for him.

Having that possibility pass in front of him, I hazily recalled.

…… could it be that he really doesn't want to see his father and mother?

I want to meet them!
I want to meet them and want to know the reason why I was cast away.

If I can I want to live with my parents.
And yet he, who was supposed to be in the same situation as me, declared "I don't want to see my parents after all this time".

Does he have that much of a grudge against the parents who cast him away?
But since I never heard of any grudge out of his mouth, that thought never crossed my mind.

Is it strange to want to meet mother and father who threw me away? Am I being strange?

While I was thinking that, the insides of my head spun around in circles.

"——Snow-chan can you go and help the other children?"
"Ok, sensei."

I reply to Elle-sensei and went to the children who were cleaning the rooms.

Without wondering who called out to Lute-kun, I only kept on thinking of myself.

That night.

Late at night, after Elle-sensei had gone to sleep, I went and trespassed into the boys' room.

By the rules of the orphanage boys and girls are not allowed to go to each others' rooms at night
It was one of the most serious crimes, if you break it you won't get a meal for a day.

But even though it was a dangerous crime to commit, I just had to ask Lute-kun. That was what I believed.

I looked for Lute-kun in the darkness of the boys' room.

Luckily I'm from the white wolf clan who could see well in the darkness. I found Lute-kun immediately.

Lute-kun, Lute-kun
"*yawn*"

Because he didn't wake up even when I raised my voice, I slapped his cheeks and shook his shoulders strongly.
After I called to him and shook him several times, Lute-kun finally opened his eyes.

"n…gaah!?"
"Shhh!!! Don't be loud. Everyone will wake up."

In surprise I clasped his mouth in a hurry.

Lute-kun did not seem to get the situation at first and he was confused, after several seconds he made some decision and he furrowed his eyebrows.
I approach him further and confirm that he completely regained consciousness.

"Everybody will wake up, be quiet please? Okay?"
nod nod

As Lute-kun nods i slowly part my hands from his mouth.

"Uhm, Snow, your feelings are—"
"Shhhh!!! Everybody will wake up if we talk here. Follow me."

I dragged Lute-kun out of his futon and took him out of the boys room.

Our destination is underneath the window in the dining hall.

Here shines starlight through the window and i can read detailed facial expressions.

It's warm here during the day but at night it feels a little chilly.
We brought our shoulders together to get each other warm.
There is also the advantage that he can easily hear even if I talk in a low voice .

Lute-kun asked in a slightly angry voice. His eyes are serious.

"So, what is the reason why you broke the rule and brought me here?"
Un… you see… there is something that I really wanted to ask you….

Certainly its late at night and I forcibly woke him up and took him out but he doesn't need to have such an angry look…

But even if I'm afraid there is no other method.
I explained the reason why I took him out.

Um… did Lute-kun ever think of meeting with your mother or father?
"…Eh!?"

"Like I said, do you want to meet the mother and father who abandoned you?"

He asked me back, looking dumbfounded.

"Snow, why are you asking me this?"
"…Today, Lute-kun told sensei 'it's not like I want to meet with them after all this time', right?
Snow wants to meet mom and dad. When we meet, Snow will ask them why they abandoned Snow away. And Snow wants to live with mom and dad… Is Snow weird for thinking like this?"

Lute-kun listened to my story in silence.
Then he changed his pose from hugging his knees to a cross-legged sitting position.

"Snow, come over here."
"Why?"
"Just do it already."

He made me sit on his lap a little bit forcibly.
Lute-kun embraces my head gently and holds my ears against his chest.

"Can you hear the sound of my heart?"
"…Yes, I can hear. It goes dokun, dokun, dokun…."
"People get relieved hearing the sound of heartbeats. This is because, as babies, we are raised hearing our mother's heartbeats."

Oddly I curled up my body in a fetal position..
I closed my eyes and leaned my body against Lute-kun.

"Wanting to meet your parents is not weird. So, there's no reason to feel worried."
"Really?"
"Uh-huh, it's true. The reason why I never thought of meeting my parents is because I have no way of looking for them."

Lute-kun starts talking in a tone like telling someone younger than him.

“Just one clue: I have a star-shaped birthmark on the back of my right shoulder; I can’t just show this to everyone I meet and ask them. Besides, I have no talent as a magician; it’s hard to think that the parents who casted me out would come back and pick me up. So, it’s clear that I will never meet with my parents again for as long as I live.”

I gasp on Lute-kuns words.

“But Snow is different. Unlike me, Snow has talent as a magician. Besides, the White Wolf race is a minority that lives in the snowy mountains of the North Continent. If you go north you might find some clues there. Even so, forgive me for saying ‘after all this time I never thought of meeting my parents’ so insensitively, ‘kay?”

He apologizes from the bottom of his heart.
But I understood. The one who had to apologize was me.

I’m an abandoned child from a minor clan, the so called White Wolf Clan from the North Continent.
If I go to a town of the white wolf clan or head to a village, my parents may be there.
There ought to be important clues, even if only a little.

Furthermore I have talent as a magician.

If I become a magician beyond B- I will not be troubled about employment and have no troubles with money.
On the contrary Lute-kun has insufficient clues and no talent as a magician.
If you become 10 years old you graduate from the orphanage and leave to work. Only staying alive is hard.

It does not mean Lute-kun doesn’t want to meet his parents.
He understands that it is all but impossible to meet his parents the way he is now and gave up.

And yet in my own selfish anxiety, I dug up the emotional scar that he had come to terms with.

My chest feels like it had been hit because of my own foolishness.

"…Snow is also sorry. Snow asked such an insensitive question without thinking of Lute-kun's feelings."
"There's no reason for you to apologize. I was the one in the wrong, you see."

I was the one who's wrong, but he still smiled and forgave me for my sake.

"If that's the case, then Snow and Lute-kun are both in the wrong. So it's a tie."
"That's right. It's a tie."
"As an apology, Snow will tell Snow's dream only to Lute-kun…."

My dream, the one I secretly held and had not told anyone, not even Elle-sensei.

"You see, when Snow is bigger, Snow will become a magician. Then, Snow will go to the north continent to look for father and mother. Once Snow finds those two, Snow will ask why they abandoned Snow away. If we could make peace, then the three of us will live together in the same house… This is Snow's dream."
"It's a good dream. If it's you, then it will absolutely come true…."

Lute-kun took a breath,

"…But if you couldn't find them or you couldn't make peace with them, Snow still has me, Elle-sensei and the kids at the orphanage. Don't forget that okay?"
"…Un, thanks Lute-kun."

Until the end, I became tearful for him, who was worried for me.

I felt the feeling of his and my heartbeats overlap, as if becoming one, and my chest became warm inside.

"Is it okay to hear the sound of Lute-kun's chest a little bit more?"
"Uh-huh, you can listen all you like."

I strengthened my arms and pressed my ear to his chest.

Lute-kun smiled wryly, and gently stroked my head, like a father or an older brother.

I loosened all the muscles in my arms and legs and let him spoil me with all my heart.

At that time I noticed a small light spark inside my chest.

When I get bigger I'll become a splendid magician, and take Lute-kun on a journey to see his mom and dad. Then once I found my mom and dad, I'll start an orphanage like Elle-sensei. Then we all can live together, me doing the management like Elle-sensei, and Lute-kun teaching the kids reading, writing, and arithmetics… If everyone can get along and stay together, that would be so wonderful.

In Lute-kun's warm arms, I drew up a new dream.

I undeservedly thought to take care of this childhood friend, whom the adults and other children would not be able to understand.

——Releasing my ear from his chest, we each went back to our rooms.

When we parted ways, Lute-kun asked me.

"Should we sleep together tonight, after all?"
"Lute-kun is ecchi~~."

Boys sure say ecchi things right away!

We finally had a good mood going, too——I thought as I angrily returned to the girls' room.

"… but that was a bit of a shame, wasn't it?"

My face flares up hot and not aware of it, my tail shakes.

I slip into my futon In a hurry so that I'm not noticed by everyone.

The next day, I found out that Lute-kun had sold the rights to reversi and other toys to a merchant and earned a huge amount of money.

Chapter 12

Lute-kun had sold the rights to reversi and other toys to Malton-san the merchant and was in a daze, having bought some magic device called "magic liquid metal" from him.

Magic liquid metal——We had been taught in our lessons that it was an item gained after defeating monsters called metal slimes.

Magic liquid metal is metal with a trace of magic power, and it had the properties of taking shape of the image when touching it while imagining armor in one's head.

On top of having limited use and being hard to handle, it seems it was expensive for being a magic device.

It was something synonymous with the term "unpopular item".
He bought that kind of thing for a lot of money.

The world's opinion of Lute-kun further fell——from "strange kid" to "creepy kid".

Not even noticing that people around him were taking their distance, he gleefully took the magic liquid metal and continuously experimented, saying "not like this", "not like that".

Unskillful but intelligent, full of curiosity, and having lots of energy he put whatever interests him into practice. He was just as I previously thought.

I don't understand what he's doing, but…… I thought, "As his only childhood friend, I should look after him".

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Lute-kun and I, age 6.

This year I came to somewhat understand what Lute-kun was making.

I saw him making something that looks like a "metal tube with a handle?", and when I asked him about it, he cheerfully explained.

Lute-kun says that it's a magic device called a "gun".

He had gone and developed his own original magic device!
Of course, I was amazed, and my head became dizzy.

Certainly, Lute-kun did make toys that everyone enjoys.

But toys and magic devices are two entirely different things.

Even if they made a house out of toy blocks, there is no one that would think that they made a real castle all by themselves.

To make an original magic device, he would need high-grade materials, magic knowledge, lots of money, and plenty of time.

There are lots of stories of magicians destroying themselves, and countries depleting their treasuries in order to develop a magic device, and yet…
Lute-kun who was smarter than me should have known this.

People's opinion of him changed from "creepy kid" to "pitiful kid who does not have talent for magic but could not face the reality".

Lute-kun himself was puzzled that “recently, the aunties helping out at the orphanage had been strangely kind, giving me sweets and all”, he didn’t notice at all.

Thickheaded as always, he continued on with the development of magic devices without noticing his surroundings.

The part when the “gun” that Lute-kun made caused a problem, was at the beginning of summer.

Early Summer.

The day when the sun’s rays start becoming harsh.

I was weak against the hot sun because of my racial traits.
I was idling away in the afternoon in the shade of the girls’ room after having finished all my work.

The other girls were playing reversi or having a chat…….
It was a sight I was so used to seeing.
I was falling into a doze, and started to close my eyes.

KABOOOM!

Just when I was going to fall asleep, I heard a sound like a bolt of thunder.
The sleepiness vanished as if it had been a lie.

“Wha, what was that loud noise just now! Hii……!?”

And then, Elle-sensei’s shriek.
All of us heard the sound and ran to the backyard, Elle-sensei rushed over to the crouching Lute-kun.

「……ッ！？」
“……gu!?”

We all gasped.

Lute-kun was holding his hand in pain, but there was a smile on his face.

It was a very mismatched scene, with blood all over his face.
The kids who were weak of heart started crying, even fainting on the spot.

The wreck of the magic device that was the source of the sound was still emitting a faint smoke.

“Everyone, don’t come! The older kids please take the young ones inside!”

Sensei had noticed us, and gave out her instructions.

Everyone immediately obeyed, and the older kids took the younger ones back inside the orphanage.

I wanted to stay there because I was worried for Lute-kun, but an older girl forcibly took my hand and led me back inside.

That night.

There was a little bit of time before bed, the topic of discussion in the girls’ room was all about Lute-kun.

It seems that the cause of the incident was magic power running amok in the middle of magic device development.

Lute-kun’s injuries were no problem thanks to Elle-sensei’s healing magic.
And as punishment for the uproar this time, he was sentenced to a 30 day ban on experiments and doing punishment work.

Ignoring what the other girls say, I recalled the words Sensei once said.

“There are those who still spend great effort even though they understand that they have no talent as magicians. Especially boys, among them there are those who do not accept reality, and get their hands on dangerous magic devices, then lose their lives”

Maybe Lute-kun is one of those people.

If that’s the case, then as a childhood friend, I had to put him back on the right path!

With the misdirected worry “for Lute-kun’s sake!”, I vowed to make Lute-kun into a good and honest person.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Lute-kun and I, age 7.

The hot summer had passed, it’s the beginning of fall.

Ever since I turned 7, I had been joining the magician’s basic classes that Elle-sensei opens in the afternoons.

At the beginning, rather than magic practice, it was harsh weight training, running to build up strength, hand-to-hand fighting, and swordplay.
But after half a year had passed, we got used to it and became able to handle it easily.

Today after lunch, we gather in the backyard of the orphanage to move our bodies.
The ones taking the class were 2 first years, 1 second year, and me as the only half-year, for a total of 4.

All are girls, they received sensei's lessons happily.

One day before the beginning of class, I looked outside the window.
I noticed a person who carried luggage come out of the backyard.

"Lute-kun!"

When I called out to him and waved my hand he stopped.

Lute-kun was wearing a hard leather belt with the magic device he made himself, hanging from its right hand side.
In his hands he holds a little barrel and on top of it is a box made of metal.

When the children of the orphanage become 7 they leave for the city to do simple work.
One part of that money goes to the orphanage and the remaining will be put aside for the future.

Originally, Lute-kun was also supposed to go out to work nowadays, but he alone was stopped from working by Elle-sensei.

When Lute-kun was 5 years old, he had sold the rights to "reversi" and other toys and gained a considerable sum of money and donated it to the orphanage.
The reason Lute-kun was prohibited from working was because if he earns any more money the other kids are going to lose their motivation.

So in the mornings he would help Elle-sensei with classes, and in the afternoons he would do experiments with that dangerous magic device by the river.

I reflexively scowled at the magic device hanging from his waist.

"Lute-kun is going to experiment on magic devices again today?"
"Experiments were mostly finished back in summer. Now it's mostly practice."

Ever since the magic device explosion incident, I had been coming over to him to say that I wanted him to stop with the magic device experiments, but he evaded the issue and continued.

I had thought of throwing away his magic device without him noticing several times, but….
I didn't do it because there is an orphanage rule saying "Other people's belongings are not to be tampered with or thrown away".

I was so worried about him, but he just laughed nonchalantly…

"If you like, I can let you touch it. If you try shooting it you will definitely appreciate this magic device's awesomeness."
"It's fine. I don't want to touch such a dangerous toy. Lute-kun also, stop carelessly making strange toys."
"It's okay already, that blunder won't happen again. I've made it nice and safe, see."

…. without understanding people's feelings….

"Anyway, be careful okay. I'm fine since I have sensei next to me, but Lute-kun doesn't. Don't do anything reckless."
"Yeah yeah, I get it. Well then, Snow too, do your best in class"

With just the right timing, Sensei showed up and called out to everyone.

"Well then everyone, let's begin magician's basic lessons"
"See you later, Lute-kun. Take care."
"See you later."

Once again Lute-kun walked towards the riverside.

I saw him off, looking at his back with an uneasy expression.

But my worries and Lute-kun's bad reputation were completely changed when he solved an incident.

That incident was……

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Afternoon of that day, evening.

Because preparations for dinner were finished I went to call Lute-kun.

He was at the so called test firing range, after leaving the backyard of the orphanage and walking 10 minutes along the riverbed you would locate that spot 100m downstream.

At the riverbed were several children of the town playing in the water.

“Its already late, you should soon go home.”
“Yeah!”

They answered energetically but the children showed no signs of going home.
After calling out to Lute-kun I decided in my heart that I would speak to him again.

“Lute-kun!”

I called out to him as he was just tidying up and waved my hand.

He raised his hand with a smile and returned to tidying up.
So that he doesn’t let me wait he moves his hand faster than previously.

“Kyaaa!”
“!?”

I was surprised at the scream from behind me and looked back, the children who played at the riverbed started running away immediately.

On the other side of the river goblins were overflowing out of the forest entrance like an avalanche!
15 of them.

That’s! I have never heard about goblins in the forest!

But the reality was before my eyes.
Its real even if I deny that fact.
I start to forcibly rearrange my confused thoughts.

The goblins are faster than imagined. At this rate they will catch up with some children. However I'm a magician apprentice, I have to protect Lute-kun and the children.

I used my magic power to near the limit at the afternoon magic classes, but since I rested, it recovered fairly well.
Until Elle-sensei comes I need to hold out.

The first fight to kill each other—— it would be a lie if I would say I was not scared, but more than that I have the strength to protect them all and a sense of duty rises up in me.

While I resolved myself, one of the children fell down in the escape and didn't move anymore.

In a hurry I rushed over to her.

No external wounds except the bruise from falling down. There was faint breathing too.

There was no problem.
Since there is no time for treating her, I cover her behind my back.

I spread out both arms and concentrate magic power in my palms.

Dance in my hands, sword of ice! Ice Sword!

In both hands appeared a one meter ice sword, conjured through magic.
It`s a attack magic of the ice magic system.

I threw it at the two closest goblins who were coming near me.

The ice sword with the speed of a gale pierces into a goblin who wears tattered armour and holds a knife.

The other one stabbed into a goblin who was preparing to shoot an arrow—but the ice sword just missed the moment when the arrow was let loose.

"…… ah"

The arrow flies straight at my chest.
At that moment I couldn't even blink—

It will pierce the child behind me if I dodge. After half a year's training I'm not able to raise a resistance formation in an instant.

I thought in an instant. Together with the arrow, death approaches.

I was careless.
As I myself can kill the opponent, the opponent can kill me too.
Goblins aren't targets for practice.

——*I don't want to die! I don't want to die! I really don't want to die!*

I cried desperately in my mind.

However the arrow flies straight at my chest as it was connected by a thread.

"Snoooooooow!"

Even now, Lute-kun's voice sounded far away, as if from the other side of the clouds—

Bang!

引き延ばされた意識を割る、聞き慣れない破裂音。

Simultaneously the arrow which flew at me was shattered in the middle and was scattered to the day after tomorrow.

"Yoshaa!"

I saw how Lute-kun raised his fist and shouted in joy.

As they heard the shout and the explosive sound, the assault of the oncoming goblins stopped.

As I was released from the danger of death, my hips grew weak and I sat down on the spot.
In that interval Lute-kun came running over to face off against the goblins to protect me.

I was about to tell gratitude towards his back but,

“Lu, Lute-kun, t, tha——”
“Never mind the thanks, Snow you hold her close and absolutely don’t move from here!”
“O, okay!”

According to his instructions, I held the fainted child close in order to protect her.

Lute-kun turned the magic tool that caused the explosion towards the goblins.

Once again, the magic device made the explosive sound like when it broke the arrow.

Simultaneously in the nearest goblin’s head was a small hole.
The goblin fell like a puppet whose strings were cut, in the river.

Lute-kun let the explosive sound resound again 4 times.

In an instant 4 goblins had a similar hole in the head and collapsed.

8 remained.

But the goblins still had an overwhelming advantage in numbers.
Frenzied, they kicked up a splash and attacked once again.

‘OOOOOOOOOOOoooooooooooooooo!’

A roar with killing intent strikes my skin.

“Hiii……”

I let a little scream out only I could hear.

And yet Lute-kun just like a veteran hero calmly fumbled with his magic tool —— And pointed the magic tool again at the flood of goblins.

In a stance like a sculpture, he calmly killed the goblins in an instant.

A goblin holding a wooden shield hid behind his shield, but the magic device Lute-kun invented made a hole in his head as if the shield wasn’t there.

In about 6 seconds from the 8 goblins at the start, 2 remained.

The two understood their unfavorable situation and turned their back and flew at full speed to the woods.

Lute-kun tampered again with the magic device and carefully watched the goblins flee to the entrance to the forest.

I wonder how much time had passed.
…… it doesn’t seem like the goblins will be coming back.

As the strength left Lute-kuns shoulder he hurriedly turned around.

“Snow are you injured? Does it hurt anywhere!”

Without even a shred of his earlier veteran hero-like battle presence, there was only my childhood friend, worrying about me.

That was the Lute-kun I knew well.

“Lute-kun I’m scared! Lute-kun……!”

I put the fainted child gently on the ground and instinctively clung to Lute-kun.

Because our height isn’t different, I buried my face in his neck.

Lute-kun didn't mind becoming dirty from my tears and gently stroked my head many, many times.

I can really calm down in Lute-kun's arms.
Like the night of that day, I listened to the beating of his warmth, and the fear for my life and first battle—all the negative emotions melted away like the snow in spring.

aah, so is it ——

thump, with my feet on the ground, I was convinced.

The thing that I, who was thrown away, always wanted. The place I must return to…… it's into Lute-kun's arms.

When I realized, my body became hot.
My whole self yelled:
"The reason I was born into this world was to meet——with him."

This is the feeling of 'falling in love'.

With maddening desire boiling up, I muttered that inside of my heart.

"Snow is admirable. Even when you're scared, you stayed behind so everyone can get away…… you're really great."

Lute-kun comforted me, who was only holding him back.
My chest was sweetly strangled by his kindness until it hurts.
I can't just stay silent.

"Lute-kun too, thank you, you protected Snow and the kids.
Thanks……"

We said our thanks to each other.

For some reason Lute-kun put on a smile as if getting a little bit of peace of mind.

Afterwards, the kids that fled earlier sought Elle-sensei's help, and she rushed over—until then, Snow and I kept on hugging, as if confirming each other's warmth.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

After the goblin attack incident, people's opinion of Lute-kun totally changed.

Until now, he was the "poor kid who didn't have talent in magic, but couldn't face reality", but because of this incident, it changed to "genius who didn't have talent in magic, but compensated for it with magic devices".

Not even minding such opinions from people, Lute-kun made a difficult face and started making a new magic device.

I unintentionally smiled faintly at his usual carefree attitude.

And then, Lute-kun and I turned 8.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

An afternoon I spent rather relaxedly, after the summer's climax has passed.

After magician's basic class had ended, I hurriedly ran to the test firing range.

My beloved childhood friend was putting his hands in a small cask, he was in the middle of making some cartridges.

Without holding back, I clung to his back.

“Lute-kun, sorry to make you wait!”
“Didn’t I tell you already, it’s dangerous if you suddenly cling to me like that. Also stop sniffing me. I reek of sweat, right?”
“Not at all! You smell really nice! *sniff sniff*”
“Stop sniffing already, it tickles.”
“Ehehehe, sorry.”

Before I know it, it had become our usual conversation.

Lute-kun breathed a sigh of resignation, and gently patted my head. His hand felt really good, and before I realized, my tail was already happily wagging left and right.

Again and again, Lute-kun’s expression changed back and forth between wanting to hug me close, and not hugging me close.

Finally, as if shaking something off, he gripped my shoulders and pushed me off.

“W, well then, let’s start practice. Hey, Snow, let go”
“I want to hug harder, just a little more.”
“Afuu~!”

I put strength into my arms, and Lute-kun made a weird sound.

“Th, that should be enough, no? If we cling like this any further we’ll have no time for practice.”
“Lute-kun is stingy.”
“Yeah yeah, stingy is fine. Here, the gunbelt. Put the cylinder in yourself.”

He bluntly handed me the gunbelt wrapped around his waist.

“It was on him until just now, so it should be smelling of fresh sweat, but of course, sniffing would be rude”, I thought as I received it.

While chanting in my heart “patience, patience”, I skillfully wrapped it around myself.

After the goblin incident, I also started practicing how to handle the magic device Lute-kun made.

He accepted, saying that I can use it for self-defense when I run out of magic power.

I took the revolver, and pushed the cylinder out.
I took some 9×29.5mmR bullets from the remaining wooden boxes, and put them in.
Raising my body abilities with body strengthening, I fired at the human shapes on the cliffs.

Practice Start.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

As the evening falls we finished tidying up and went back to the orphanage hand in hand.

Just now I stole a glance at Lute-kun's face that was illuminated by the setting sun.

All the children in the orphanage have to leave when they turn 10, no exceptions.

As for me, I plan on enrolling into a magic school.

Lute-kun and I are both 8 years old.
It's an age where we should soon think of our careers.

I wonder what Lute-kun plans to do….

Every once in a while, he looks far away much unlike someone his age.

What Lute-kun is thinking, what he is going to do, not even I, the closest childhood friend to him, knows.

So I sometimes become afraid.

Surely Lute-kun is going to accomplish something.
Maybe something even the 5 great race heroes couldn't do, I think he's going to do something amazing like that.

The fact that he could make a magic device stronger than magic at 7 years old is proof above all.

For an ordinary person like me, it's hard to be at his side, I suppose.
Even though my feelings of "I like him" "I love him" won't lose to anyone.

If we leave the orphanage as we are now, the connection between Lute-kun and I will end just like this.
After that, I don't think we're ever going to cross paths again—even though I'm supposed to return to his arms.

As I thought that, my body became cold, as if being suddenly thrown naked to some snowy mountain.

I want to stay at his side.
In whatever way possible.

If I can be selfish, I want to connect Lute-kun's blood with the next generation in my belly.
I want to bear his child.
Seeking the strongest bonds over all relations, that's the instinct of a white wolf.

I'm surely going to love that child more than myself.

"Lute-kun what will you do when you become 10?"

I resolved myself and asked him about his plans after graduation.

"As I thought, you're going to Malton-san's place to run a toy store?"
"No, that's not it."

Lute-kun said that without wavering.

"I was thinking of going on a journey when I turn 10. Then… If I can, I want to help people in trouble or in need of help."
"Why do you want to do that?"

Receiving an unexpected answer, I reflexively asked again.

He hesitated—then opened his mouth to talk.

"Last year I helped Snow right? That time, I felt that helping others is something worth doing."
"If that's so, then Snow will go on a journey with Lute-kun!"
"Snow will go to school when you turn 10, right? Then you will become a splendid magician and go to the north continent to look for your parents, that was your dream, right?"
"If I'm with Lute-kun, I can go to the north continent the way I am now."

It doesn't matter if I don't enter a magic school, as long as I can be with my beloved Lute-kun.

But hearing my remarks, Lute-kun made a very sad face.

"I would be happy to be together with Snow. But, Snow has talent to become a magician. I don't want to be with Snow so much as to eat away Snow's talent. I don't want to become a burden for Snow."

"Lute-kun……"

It's sad, but what he said was right.

No matter how much I say I love him, I don't want to eat away at his talent, I don't want to be holding him back. Just staying together with him against his will, that wouldn't mean anything.

“I like him” “I love him”—just that feeling alone doesn’t allow me to stay by his side.

Of course I had to become stronger, at least so I don’t become a burden. Because of that, I have no choice but to go to a magic school.

But if I separate from Lute-kun just like that….

Once again I was struck by fear.

The fear of being separated from Lute-kun just as childhood friends, and not being able to meet him again.

I don’t want that! I want to always be with Lute-kun!

I wiped my rising tears with my finger.
I stopped my feet and released my hands, then turned around to face Lute-kun.

Miraculously, that place is exactly where I was attacked by goblins, and where he saved me.

I summoned my courage, and told him the feelings I always wanted to say.

I clasped my hands on my chest, mustered courage and raised my voice.

“There is something…… I’ve always wanted to tell Lute-kun.”

He probably had guessed, and faced me with a serious look.

I mustered my courage with all my might, putting all my feelings as it is, and shouted.

“Snow…… Please make Snow into Lute-kun’s “sex slave”!”

“——Huuuwwwwhhhaaaattttt!!!?”

Chapter 13

Lute, age 8.

"Snow…… Please make Snow into Lute-kun's "sex slave"!"

Idiot Snow made a most unexpected remark, I was dumbfounded.

Holding back a painful expression, I pressed her for an answer.

"S, Snow, do you understand what "sex slave" means? Actually, where did you even learn that word?"
"Of course I understand. Some of the merchants that I work making magic stones for also handle slaves, I heard that from them. "Sex slaves" will absolutely stay by their masters' side. Because I want to always be by Lute-kun's side, I want to be a "sex slave"!"

Oi, merchant. What the hell are you teaching an 8 year old kid…….. Does this world have no concept of decency or sexual harassment?

As I cursed the merchant for teaching Snow strange things, I asked her.

"I'm happy about Snow's feelings, but we're still 8 years old, special relationships like "sex slaves" are a bit……. Aren't there more ordinary choices, like lovers or married couples?"
"Lovers… married couples…"

Snow frowned and hung her head, but immediately raised it back up and made a firm smile.

"…… It's fine, I already understood. I'm not a suitable person for Lute-kun. But I'll be happy just staying by Lute-kun's side. So, so, don't worry about me!"
"Sorry, I don't get what you mean. Why is Snow not a suitable person for me?"
"Well, Lute-kun is a genius who can make a magic device more amazing than magic at 7 years old, right? From the beginning, I never thought of becoming lovers or couples with someone amazing like that…."

I can finally get a glimpse of Snow's thoughts.

Somehow the me in her mind is an unimaginably amazing person.

There's no way that kind of person will love her.
But conflictingly, she wanted to stay by his side.
Therefore she came to the conclusion to be a "sex slave" instead of lovers or spouses.

Well, I was spoiled by Snow's courtesy, since I didn't properly tell her my feelings.

I ran away from telling her my feelings using excuses like, "because she's an 8 year old kid" or "because she has choices".

It's my own misunderstanding, but I was afraid of being dumped.

Because of that, I even waited until she confesses to me.

If it's like that —— then I won't get hurt.

I understand well the reason why the amount of years I spent without a girlfriend equals my age in my previous life.
Even though I should have sworn to not run away from hardship ever again, but once I noticed, I had run from what was in front of me and took the easy path.

In order to wipe away Snow's uneasiness, I decided to summon courage from within.

I put the small cask on the ground and opened the lid.
I put my hands in the remaining magic liquid metal and raised the image.

A pair of bracelets were made in my hands.

The bracelets were merely black loops, without any decorations.
Because I didn't have time, this was the limit of what I can do.

I held the bracelets in hand, and once again faced Snow.

"Snow."
"Y, yes!"

Her eyes were rooted on the bracelets in my hand.

There were legends about the 5 great heroes that saved this world.

One of them is: the night before facing the demon king of the Fairy Human Continent together, the Human Hero gifted a bracelet to the Fairy Hero as his lover.

The hero proposed to marry her once they defeated the demon king and returned.

From then on, this world developed a custom of gifting the partner with a bracelet when marrying. Then, the act of wearing a bracelet had come to mean that one had a marriage partner or someone they plan to marry.

Speaking in terms of my previous world, it's a wedding ring.

With the bracelets in hand, I proposed to Snow for marriage.

"We're still 8 years old, but, I like Snow, I love Snow. I don't want to give Snow to anyone. So…… will you marry me?"
"Y……yes. Me too…… I love Lute-kun very much. I love you."

She made a smile, and from her large eyes, pearly drops of tears came falling down.

I took Snow's slender left arm and put the bracelet on.

Snow, too, took my arm and put the bracelet on.

Then with the setting sun as our witness, Snow and I exchanged our first kisses.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

“Snow-chan and Lute-kun are getting married!?”

After dinner that night, we asked Elle-sensei for some time and reported our engagement.

The two of us sat beside each other in the orphanage reception office, in front of Sensei.

Snow was clinging on to my arm the whole time we were in the room. Her tail was wagging so much, I was worried that it might get torn off.

“Looking at the two of you, I felt that it would happen “someday”, but marrying at 8 years old…….”

Elle-sensei was confused, she couldn’t believe what had happened.

There are no age limits on marriage in this world.
But even so, getting married at 8 years old is very early.

“Of course, since we’re only 8 year old kids, this is not meant to be an official marriage. We still have no way of living together, too. So after all, these bracelets are just for our engagement. I intend to formally buy Snow a proper bracelet once she graduates magic school. At that time, we will be around 15, which is just about the right age.”

It’s usual for nobles of this world to engage in political marriages.
For that reason their children would wear simple bracelets on their left arms as proof of the engagement.
Then at the time of marriage, it is exchanged for a new bracelet (a splendid one, inlaid with gems).

Common people generally don’t use engagement bracelets, they just simply finish with marriage bracelets.
But if they’re reasonably affluent, there is a custom of seeing their children off with engagement bracelets.

In my case, since there is magic liquid metal as material, I can use a pair of self-made ones.

"I see. Sensei is surprised, you see. I thought, 8 year olds couldn't possibly be getting married."
"……. Though the bracelets Lute-kun made are good enough as wedding bracelets for me."
"Snow, I'm happy you think that way, but these are things made on the spot, after all. I'll get you proper bracelets when we turn 15, so I'd like you to wait until then."
"Un, okay. If it's Lute-kun saying it, I'll listen and I'll wait however many years."

Snow laughed "nihera", seemingly happy from the bottom of her heart.

Sensei smiled faintly and asked.

"Then once Lute-kun turns 10, do you intend to go together with Snow?"

There is a large city near the magic school.

Sensei seems to think that I "intend to live there waiting for Snow to graduate", while working.

"No, until she graduates I am going to go on a journey."
"Journey is it…? Why is that again?"

I told Sensei the same reason I told Snow.

Listening to my story, Sensei clasped her hands on her chest.

"You want to help people in need with your magic device, is it…?…. if so, how about becoming an adventurer through the Adventurers' Guild and starting a Legion?"
"Legion?"
"Yes, do you know about adventurers?"

Adventurers are one of the jobs in this world.

One can become an adventurer by registering with the Adventurers' Guild.

They cover a lot of jobs—like monster extermination, bounty hunting, or ruin exploration.
In other words, jacks of all trades.

"If you become an adventurer and fulfill the requirements, you can receive the rights to start a Legion from the Adventurers' Guild. Among Legions, there are ones advertising specialties like "Won't defeat anything but dragons", "Won't accept members other than noble magicians higher than B rank", "Only accepts female adventurers as members". Therefore if you become an adventurer and make a Legion and declare the objective of saving people in trouble, you can save more people compared to just going on a journey alone. If you make a name for yourself, people seeking assistance will directly come to you."

After listening to Sensei's explanation, I put my hand on my chin.

Certainly, starting a Legion seems to have many benefits.
By making, organizing, my own Legion—my own army, and taking action, I can save lots of people. This world is a dangerous place, so rather than moving alone, mobilizing a number of people is a lot safer. Then, once Snow graduates from magic school, I'll have her enter the army, and we can be together forever. Developing stronger weapons, I can protect Snow.

Un, making my own army is not a bad thing.

"If you're interested, Sensei's twin younger sister work as an adventurer, I can write her a letter of introduction. Learning the basics of adventuring under her sounds good, no?"
"So Sensei has a younger sister. I never knew."
"This is the first time I heard of it too."
"She's not a magician, but she's a good girl, with a kind personality and full of adventurous spirit. She had a bit of a failure involving money when she was younger, but……I'm sure that she got over it when she

grew up. In the old days, she used to take Sensei, who was always playing inside, along outside."

Sensei delightedly talked about her sister.

If it's under Sensei's younger sister, she'll be my teacher for learning the ABCs of being an adventurer, I can't think of anything more with that personnel.

"I think I'll become an adventurer and start my own Legion. So would you please write your sister a letter of introduction?"
"All right, then I'll hand it to you when Snow-chan goes to magic school."

Snow and I bowed our heads and said "thank you very much."

Sensei changed the topic, and warned us with a red face.

"Congratulations on your engagement, but, you two are still 8. Your bodies still have a lot of growing to do, so never, ever, uh, err…… don't do *that* kind of thing. On that point, rather than Snow-chan it's Lute-kun who should be careful."
"Y, yes, understood. I'll be careful."
"?"

Only Snow tilted her head in puzzlement.

"Other than that, though you two are engaged, please keep it within bounds in front of the other kids. Just do things in moderation. Because it's bad for their education."
"Understood."
"And another thing—"
"There's still more!?"
"Of course. Listen well, Lute-kun. Since you're now engaged to Snow-chan, from now on please refrain from stealing glances at other kids' breasts or bottoms. Polygamy is a common thing, but please don't do it so casually."

I asked back with a serious expression.

"……..Not at all, Sensei. I don't understand what you're talking about at all."
"It's useless to try and trick me with that serious face. Lute-kun's ecchi eyes are already exposed."
"Particularly this year. I think he does it to me on purpose."
"Even if Lute-kun acts like a gentlemen on the surface, girls are especially sensitive to boys' gazes. Please fix your ecchi personality just a little bit, okay."

Elle-sensei scolded me, stretching one finger.

Uooooooo! That can't be, my stealing glances were exposed!?

I reflexively became perplexed.

"Then finally, Lute-kun, Snow-chan, the two of you, please be happy."

Elle-sensei said her honest congratulations.

We answered "yes" in unison.

Chapter 14

Lute, age 9.

The middle of summer—kids from the orphanage, townspeople and merchants coming and going, were gathered at the town entrance.

We were seeing off Snow, who was going to magic school.

Besides her, a young girl from town decided to go work in the town near the magic school.
The two of them were hitching a ride on a merchant's horse cart who was headed for that town.
Of course, they paid a suitable compensation.

Travelling to their destination town takes about 3 months by horse cart.

Also, the magic school was located in the north of the Fairy Human Continent (the continent where the main inhabitants are Humans and Fairies. The orphanage is also in the Fairy Human Continent.)
So there is a lot of snow piled up.
The reason they set off in summer, is in order to arrive at the magic school before snow falls for real.

"Lute-kun, are you sure you won't come to the magician school with me? There is an Adventurers' Guild at the town near the magic school, I will support us both by earning our living expenses."
"Support huh…… I don't want to be a dependent."

While feeling shocked, I stroked Snow's head that was buried in my chest.

This year my body height had grown considerably, the difference to Snow's had started to appear.

"Once I leave town and things calm down, I'll write you a letter, if I have leisure time I'll also come to see you. Snow should study to become a magician properly."
"……. I'll write letters too, I'll make time and come visit. Absolutely."
"Yeah, let's look forward to that time."
"Let me sniff you for the last time, because after this I can't sniff you again for some time."

Without my acknowledgement, Snow sniffed me in front of people.

Because of company, I soon peeled her off me.

"Doing that in front of people is embarrassing, so stop it."
"Au, Lute-kun is mean."
"You can consider this an apology, but here's a present from me."

From the bag I brought, I took out a handgun and holster for Snow's exclusive use, and handed them over.

"It's smaller than Lute-kun's revolver?"

It's a "S&W M10" revolver with a shorter 2-inch barrel, in a silver finish

The holder the revolver hangs from is brown leather.
It was a custom-made article, a "shoulder holster" that hangs from the shoulder, not the type that hangs from the waist.

It was not well suited for quick draws, but in Snow's case it was for her self-protection after all.
Even when she can use attack magic, the gun is convenient because it doesn't require a spell, and can work in tight spaces.
So for her self-defense, I chose the "shoulder holster" type that was better concealed.

Also, recently Snow's breasts had grown again.

The highlight factor when big-breasted women use "shoulder holsters" is higher.
So because of my own tastes I made that choice as a result.

"Even though the range and accuracy is lower because of the short barrel, it's more convenient to carry, no? But in the end, it's for self-protection so don't use it wildly."

Regarding the range and accuracy, I thought there was no need to consider it since it wasn't intended for long-range sniping, but I warned her just in case.

Also, for the cartridges, I handed over 2 wooden boxes each containing 50 rounds.
For a total of 100 rounds.

By the way, though I tried to have Snow make cartridges, she didn't succeed even once. Probably it's impossible even for Elle-sensei.

On top of not being able to imagine the powder, the cartridges' thickness, length, balance—none of those can be skillfully made. It seems that magicians who only have the knowledge of this world can't make ammunition.

"Thanks, Lute-kun. I'll use it carefully."
"Don't catch a cold or get hurt. Also, don't do anything unreasonable."
Snow unexpectedly would run swiftly without thinking of the consequences.

That was the case during the goblin incident.

She smiled faintly with tears in her eyes, saying "I get it."

Elle-sensei stood in front of Snow, replacing me.

"Snow has the talent of a magician no less than B-plus rank. However, absolutely don't be haughty and humbly make effort. Okay?"
"Yes, understood."
"Lastly Snow-san, you are by no means alone. There is Lute-kun, there's also everyone at the orphanage, and also Sensei. So if life doesn't treat you well, don't overdo it, come back to this town. After all, this is Snow-san's hometown, and the orphanage is your home."
"Ye…. hii, understood. Sensei, thank you very much."

The tears that Snow resisted, flowed down because of Sensei's words.

Not minding her surroundings, she clung to Sensei and cried.

Elle-sensei hugged her close like her actual mother.

After Snow calmed down, Elle-sensei parted with her.
Holding the wooden boxes and revolver in her hand, Snow got on the canopied horse cart.
Her luggage had already been loaded.
From the drivers' seat, the merchant roused the horned horses.
The two horned horses slowly started walking.

"Elle-sensei, everyone, thank you! Lute-kun, absolutely write me a letter! Come visit me!"

With tears flowing down, Snow earnestly waved her hand.

Sensei and the orphanage kids, and also myself, kept waving our hands until the horse cart was out of sight.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Early in the morning 3 days after I saw Snow off.

A horned horse was tied down at the orphanage entrance.

Two small casks were tied down, balanced on its back.
Besides that some luggage hung there.

“It’s not like you have to go out this early…”
“Because I’m weak to showy things like that time with Snow.”

I approached the back of the horned horse I borrowed and fastened the last piece of luggage, which is the AK47.
Above the usual clothes I wore a mantle I just bought.
On the waist, a gunbelt.
All cartridges were already placed in the cylinder.
For self protection the revolver is enough.

As for the horned horse, I planned to return it at the commercial city Tver, which was a 10-day trip away from town.

There is more luggage than Snow`s. But to hire a covered wagon and a driver would be too much of a waste.
Hence I borrowed a horned horse to go towards the commercial city Tver.

If it’s a large city like Tver, there’s bound to be a horse cart I can ride with.

I need to pay an extra charge for the luggage and the trip will take an estimated 2 months

The magic school Snow went to is in the north with much snow.
On the other hand I'm on the exact opposite , south――I aim at a city near the beastmen continent where Elle-senseis twin younger sister lives.

I will learn the ABC of Adventurers under her.
And about 5 years after that.
I plan to start a Legion for helping people and join with Snow when she graduates from the magic school.

Elle-sensei holds one envelope out.

"Inside is a letter of introduction and the home address of my little sister, never lose it."
"Thank you! I will put it deep inside my sling bag."

I took the bag down from my back, opened it and stored the envelope in it.

Elle-sensei watches me and starts talking nostalgically.

"I'll be frank with you now. To be honest, at the beginning, I disliked Lute kun."
"…eh please don't make such a shocking remark so suddenly. I was disliked by sensei?"

I finished putting the envelope away and rebuked.
She waved her hand with a faint smile.

"No its not like that. Its not dislike, it was hard. After all just when you were 3 years old you quietly listened to classes, raised problems at the magic lessons next you made the reversi game where you earned a lot of money."

Certainly, if I look back on it, I had acted a little too unchildlike because of having some memories of my past life.

When I imagined what if my own child was someone like me, my shoulders became heavy.

About this time I noticed how much trouble I caused Elle-sensei.

“But now I think I can be proud of Lute-kun. Being able to make a magic device that could defeat goblins, not being arrogant even when having earned a lot of money, and using that power for the world and for the people in the future, normally you wouldn’t think like that.”
“No, that sort of thing… Its not something to praise to such extent.”
“No, its truly amazing. I’m rooting for your dream from the bottom of my heart Lute-kun――”

And then Elle-sensei tightly embraced me like Snow.

Just like a real mother.

“I said it also to Snow-san, Lute -kun is also not in the least alone. There is Snow-san, everyone from the orphanage and Elle-sensei. So if it’s too hard, please come back to this town. Because this town is Lute-kun’s hometown, and the orphanage is your home.”
“……Thank you. Elle-sensei.”

This is the reason for refusing to be sent off by others, except Elle-sensei.

My mental age is already over 30 years.
However, this is because I had no confidence to endure that hot thing that filled my chest.

Be it the previous world or this world, it is embarrassing to show tears in public.

I separate my face from Elle-sensei’s chest and strongly wipe my eyes.

Little birds are singing, the early morning air hits my face and in the surrounding floats light mist. The sun begins to rise and the sky is painted in a clear blue.

About 9 years and a half—I think it’s a good day to be the first time I go out of the town I was raised in.

For a long time I've received Elle-sensei`s favor.
"Greet my sister for me. Then, when you have settled down, turn up again. Breaking this contact is prohibited."
"Of course. Besides, once Snow and I have married, we will absolutely come and inform you."

Although this is the beginning of a journey, it's not like we will never meet again.
So I call out to Elle-sensei cheerfully.

"Well then, I'm on my way!"
"Yes, take care. Take care of your health."
"Yes!"

I nod and start walking.

I mount the horned horse, pull the rains and slowly go forward.

When I looked back and waved my hand, Elle-sensei wiped her eyes with a finger and returned it with her best smile.

Just like this, I, Lute, formerly Hotta Youta, took my first step to fulfill my dream alone, bathed in the morning sun.

First volume end

Equipment: S&W M10(revolver)
: AK47(assault rifle)